ENCOUNTER

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Dwight Macdonald

reports on

Ten Days in Cairo

ON October 26 last, I boarded a plane for Egypt, a country we—the editors of ENCOUNTER and myself—had decided might make an interesting subject for reportage. (Hungary was the runner-up.) The article was to be focused on the so-called Nasser Revolution, that is, the social and cultural aspects of life under the present régime; I did not intend to go much into foreign policy, Suez having been abundantly written about, and, besides, the crisis was now ancient history. Two days after I got to Cairo, the Israelis attacked; four days after, British planes began bombing the outskirts of the city; the colleges were closed, there was a blackout every night, and people were not in a mood to educate me about topics so remote as social reforms. I can therefore not pretend to give any balanced or even mildly authoritative view of the Nasser Revolution or of Egyptian problems. But I did see a few people and did have a few experiences and a great many impressions. The journal that follows covers ten of the more interesting days of my three weeks in Cairo; it is written from notes I made at the time.

SATURDAY, October 27: Arrive Heliopolis airport at 1.30 a.m. Several mothers with small children on plane, families of American and European businessmen returning now that the Suez crisis is over. Customs inspection perfunctory, genial. Porters wear long belted gowns, red fez with black silk tassel. Otherwise airport is like all airports; in last 24 hours have been in Rome, Athens, and Istanbul and might as well have been in Birmingham, Lyons, and Los Angeles; a completely abstract form of travel. . . . First sense of Egypt on bus to city: the soft warm air, fragrant and balmy, the velvet Egyptian night, the moon and stars more voluptuously brilliant than our prim Northern ones. . . . High, cavernous, dim entrance to hotel; the porter who takes my bag is a tall, black Sudanese, with the three ritual scars on each cheek, gowned in green silk, gold-embroidered vest, red sash. As I stumble wearily to the desk to register—it is now 3.30 a.m.—a portly Egyptian in a double-breasted suit bows, hands me a card (MOHAMED GAUDA EL SHAER, Dragoman No. 15, Hotel Continental) and proposes a trip to the Pyramids. Has he been waiting up all night for me? "Later," I mumble. "Oh yes of course later, but let us make the arrangements now." I indicate that "later" applies even to this, and reluctantly he lets me register. (After this, for several days, until the bombings and the dearth of tourists discourage even the Cairene guides, he or his assistant bob up every time I enter the lobby and reproachfully intimate it is now "later." They seem to have established some kind of feudal right in me.)

Get up at noon and go out for a walk. Approached at intervals by friendly citizens who hail me in English, walk along chatting,

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finally ask me to visit their shop "just nearby"; never definite as to exactly what is sold there; whatever one wants, I gather. Last one's gambit: "I know what you are looking for." "?" "You want *interesting* things." "?" "Hocus-pocus . . . can-can . . . Fanny Bitcher. . . . I have it all . . . just a short walk." Also offered unlikely objects by persistent series of street vendors. One first produced canes, then long-handled shoe-horns, then a blackjack. Five minutes later another began with the shoe-horns (over-production of these lately?), switched to sword-canes. Bright-eyed, grinning kids—real "Street Arabs"—specialise in cards of those little celluloid sticks one puts into soft collars to keep them straight.

Between entrepreneurs, manage glimpses of the city—the modern central part, that is. First impression: more like New York than London; broad straight boulevards, tall (eight to twelve storeys) buildings, many big glossy American cars. No bicycles; people either rich enough to buy a car or too poor to buy a bike. No middle class. Thus, turn off the broad Kasr el Nil, lined with luxury shops, and in half a block find myself stumbling through the cluttered squalor of Eastern poverty; thus, outside the great plate-glass window of Air France a beggar woman crouches, shrouded in black, head bowed forward touching the pavement, palms turned up, whining softly for alms. (Though not many beggars nor, except for a few kids, any demands for *baksheesh*.) . . . The trolley-cars, two or three coupled together like a little train, are the old-fashioned kind, open on both sides, we used to have in summer in the States forty years ago—maybe the same ones. . . . A great deal of new building going on. . . . Many policemen, some slouching on a corner with a rifle, others tentatively directing traffic with little control-boxes; they are in white, with white sun-helmets on the back of their heads, don't look very smart or authoritative. . . . Wander into a large department store. Entire ceiling of ground floor dangles chandeliers, every style, from cheap Mickey Mouse ones at £3 to huge crystal affairs at £1,000; underneath, lots of bronze statuettes on marble bases (horse tamer, Spanish señorita, Arab on camel, lady with does), and much Louis Quinze style furniture; general effect—a junk shop in which everything is new.

SUNDAY, October 28: A general strike that lasts all day; no taxis, no buses, everything closed. Strike is to protest the French high-jacking of the five Algerian leaders; seems odd method, since it deprives Egypt of one day's production (Sunday is not a holiday here), does no damage to enemy. Set out to walk to the Citadel (built by Saladin in 1166 with stone from the Pyramids), hoping I don't look French; American passport in pocket. A few blocks of well-paved modern streets, then the huge coffee-coloured Abdin Palace (like most of Cairo's public buildings, in a dispirited, doughy Beaux-Arts style), then abruptly chaos, great holes in the pavement, dirt, dust, mean houses, dismal dark little shops, everything broken-down, run-down, always-down, and nobody bothers to sweep, wash, repair, polish, or clean anything. Islands of new buildings which will be as bedraggled and disastrous as the rest in a few years (or months?—decay spreads fast here, breaks through like the jungle invading a tropical town). Most of Cairo seems to be either being built or going to seed; the raw disorder of a frontier town, or the shabbiness of a decaying old one. The exceptions are, on the one hand, the central boulevards and the rich suburbs like Zamalek and Maadi, and, on the other, the real native slums in the older districts, where poverty, filth, and disorder reach nightmare proportions. Can't understand how travellers can think this kind of thing picturesque.

Reach a broad avenue along which every third house seems to be half-destroyed (people living, or rather existing, in the ruins). Wonder if bombed, but learn later the street was widened recently—Nasser has been something of a Baron Haussmann in Cairo; tear down in haste, fix up at leisure. Ask directions of two young men in Western dress walking, as is the custom, hand in hand. They very kindly walk with me all the way

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to the Citadel. They are engineering students, speak some English (as did most of those I asked directions of—English is the second language in the schools). When they learn I am American, one says, "Your Mr. Dulles not give us money for the dam. O.K. We will build the dam with our hands. We don't need England, France, the States." Find the Citadel gates closed, and, while I am hesitating, am taken in tow by another young Egyptian who leads me on a long tour up into the cemetery behind—streets of low houses, each built over the family burying-place, in which the living eat and sleep on holy days; whole effect very sinister—and the fantastic private zoo, gardens, and country house where a colony of Albanian monks, of the Sufi sect of Moslems, who were driven out of Turkey by Ataturk, live and meditate. There are also some 16th century Turkish tombs, marble oblongs with odd pillars each topped by the same kind of turban that the Sufi monks still wear, which are in a long dark tunnel-like cave hollowed out of the rock; my companion, who seems very intelligent and "Westernised" (he runs a lathe in a machine shop, is studying at night to become a teacher of history), points to an Arabic inscription and says: "That is to keep the rock from falling down. It is magic, from the Koran. No matter what happen, maybe earthquake, not one littlest piece of rock will fall here. Writing makes all safe." He seems quite serious. Later he walks with me all the way back to the hotel, explaining it is getting dark and it might be "better" if I didn't go alone. At one point I ask him whether he approves of Nasser's taking the canal; he smiles at so simple-minded a question: "Of course." (I didn't find one Egyptian who wasn't delighted about the canal seizure; they all regard it as a token of Egypt's at last becoming a real independent country, able to assert her national rights even against the English.) I also ask him how much he makes; he says £12 a month—on which he supports a wife and baby, or tries to. When I want to give him something as we part, he protests. "No, please. I didn't do it for money. Just for friendliness."

MONDAY, October 29: Call on XY at American Embassy in morning; directive has just come from Washington that all Americans in Egypt, except those with "compelling reasons" to remain, should clear out at once. XY seems as puzzled as I am—why at this late date, with the Suez crisis long over? But is energetically doing his part in the long-prepared plan of evacuation, first step being to get word to the two thousand or so Americans in Egypt. "We'll probably organise convoys out via Alexandria in a couple of days. Do you want to go?" I decide no, too silly to go back three days after arriving. (By Thursday all the Americans who wanted to leave—about 1,500—were actually embarked on American naval vessels at Alexandria, a remarkably fast and efficient job—if only our political know-how were on a par with our technical!)

Spend rest of day on couple of interviews and trying to arrange others. This last not so simple. There are many mysteries of Cairo, and one is the telephone book, which lists Egyptians according to their first names (usually, that is; there are no general rules here). If one doesn't know that Abdul Hadzain is *Mohammed* Abdul Hadzain, it's just too bad; and even if one does, there are a great many Mohammeds and even a lot of Mohammed Abduls. A telephone book, I now realise, is a peculiar product of Western rationality. I was unable to solve even so simple a problem as the number of the American Embassy, because I looked under "American" and "United States" but not under "Embassy." Nor is it a simple matter to find an address. Many of the main streets have been renamed since 1952—Farouk Street is now Nile Street, Fouad I Street is now the Avenue of the 26th of July, etc. And street numbers, except in the very centre of town, are of slight help; one needs precise instructions—"first street on left after crossing the Abbas Bridge, and then the next house but one to the power station." There are many other mysteries of Cairo. A huge government building stretches along one side of the Midan el Horriya, one of the main squares; when two people in succession told me

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Farouk built it to hide a new (and hideous) Christian church, I didn't believe it; but when a third confirmed this, I did; the motive was not æsthetic—a new and equally hideous mosque was built nearby, in plain sight.

Another mystery that bothered me was a poster, stuck up everywhere: *ESCALIER. . . . La Revue Musicale. . . . A Grand Spectacle. . . . 100 costumes, 100 danseuses, danseurs, chanteurs, acteurs. . . . Theatre de l'Ezbekieh.* I was planning to go this evening when I noticed, on the bottom line: *Du 25 au 28 Octobre.* One must be alert if one wants to go to the theatre in Cairo.

Dine with Armenian doctor at Groppi's, which is run by Greeks as are most of best restaurants; excellent *prix fixe* dinner for 12s.; told the government compels all restaurants to include in menu a moderate-priced meal. (Egypt not expensive; room and breakfast in a modern hotel, more comfortable than all but most luxurious London hotels, may be had for £1.) Afterward, taken for drive along Nile. Neon signs inscribe the darkness with soft glowing colours. One, a huge circle of red and blue with Arabic lettering, looks familiar; it is the Pepsi-Cola bottle-cap.

Not the least baffling aspect of Cairo is the meeting, Kipling to the contrary notwithstanding, of East and West. Betty Grable and Gary Cooper stare from billboards, garlanded with Arabic squiggles; a great wooden Yale key dangles in front of a store; the cabalistic words of Western business enterprise adorn the skyline: Jantzen, Dewar's Whisky, Players Please, His Master's Voice, BOAC, IBM, Berlitz, Fly TWA, Paramount Films of Egypt, Etam, Olivetti, Singer. The big new concrete buildings, much more modern in style than most of London or New York, are constructed by ragged hordes of labourers whose costume and methods seem little different from those who built the Pyramids; the scaffolding is of rickety second-hand bits of lumber, like driftwood, tied together by rags; a file of bare-legged, turbaned workers carries sand in baskets on their heads to the cement mixer. But perhaps Kipling was right after all; East and West clash rather than meet here. The balconies of the big new apartment buildings are festooned with laundry; the marble banking counters in the imposing National Bank building are littered with old Coca Cola bottles; the pavement of the most elegant boulevard is liable to quit without notice; the arcades of the Immobilia building, a handsome Bauhaus-style skyscraper, are littered with dirt, straw, fruit skins; there are zebra stripes at crossings, just like London, but nobody pays any attention to them; the slack, unsoldierly-looking soldiers march to bagpipes with the high arm-swing of a crack British regiment. When I turned on my light in my elegant hotel room last night, a tiny pink lizard darted across the wall, and this morning, hearing a strange rattling on my balcony, I rushed out in time to see a great hawk, who had been investigating the remnants of my breakfast, lumber gracefully away on slowly-flapping wings.

TUESDAY, October 30: "Israeli forces last night crossed the Egyptian frontier in South Sinai," reports the *Gazette* this morning. Begin first of several fruitless efforts to get information from the Administration of Information (a subsidiary of the Ministry of National Guidance); present list of things to see—a "combined unit," one of the two hundred or so social-work projects in villages; a movie studio (Cairo is the Hollywood of the Arab world); a criminal trial; the refugees in the Gaza Strip; the "Liberation Province," a desert-reclamation project that sounds like the Israeli kibbutz farms and that is much publicised by the régime; etc. Mr. Raschid, a gentle and courteous little man, begs me to return in a few days; "I fear your visit comes at an inopportune time"; I gloomily agree. (I never do get to any of these, except the movie studio, and even that is arranged for me by the Arab League; the Ministry provides me neither information nor guidance. Later hear curious reports about the Liberation Province: that both sexes wear uniforms, work and rest according to rigid schedule, and are allowed a maximum of two children;

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that only young couples are allowed there, and their parents cannot go with them though they are allowed to visit at stated times; that a Czech journalist said: "But this is real Communism. We don't have anything like this at home." However, reassuringly learned that in two years only six hundred families have been settled in this highly advertised region.)

Interview with Dr. Huzain, the rector-to-be of Assout University, first one south of Cairo, which they hope to open next year if funds permit. He is intelligent, earnest, sympathetic. Says the Nasser régime has accomplished much in education: (1) great increase in primary schools (now almost two million pupils) and in colleges (now some 60,000, of whom 25,000 at Cairo University, 18,000 at Ein Shams nearby, 13,000 at Alexandria, and 12,000 at the great Islamic university in the ancient Al Azhar mosque in Cairo, which, he says with a smile, is three hundred years older than Oxford); (2) increase in secondary and college education for women—there are now 5,000 women college students; (3) equal opportunity for rich and poor—the state gives any qualified needy student £7 a month for his room and board —the sister of the Minister of Education couldn't get into college when she failed the entrance examination; (4) better discipline of the students, who used to be stirred up, and even paid, by political agitators to strike and riot. (This last was confirmed by several other sources; every one, even those critical of the régime, feels this is a gain, and also that the students are more docile as much because they like the régime as because the campuses are better policed.)

Attend the weekly Rotary Club luncheon at the Semiramis Hotel. My host, an Egyptian, engages in traditional Rotary badinage (see *Babbitt*) with fellow-members; nobody talks about the invasion. Except for preponderance of dark skins and the waiters in robes and fezzes, could be a Rotary luncheon anywhere. Walls hung with small silk pennons presented by other clubs: Montgomery, Alabama; Oxford, England; Delhi, India; Bronxville, New York; etc. After lunch (tomato soup, steak, peas, ice cream) a realtor from Pasadena, with the determined smile and enthusiastic intonation of his kind, presents the club with a pennon from that California paradise. Meet, among others, the local YMCA secretary, a grey-haired, pink-cheeked little man with rimless glasses who looks like all YMCA secretaries and who pumps my hand earnestly as he asks, "What home town do *you* hail from?" A French architect gives a talk, in French, on the new Shepheard's Hotel, a tall white-and-blue building that is being completed across the street from the Semiramis. (In time to be burned down again, I wonder?—already the Israeli attack has stimulated those uneasy thoughts of the 1952 sack of Cairo that will be with me until I leave.)

That evening, as I am talking on the phone with a friend from the States, an American woman married to a young government economist—she is nervous, and I try to reassure her—the lights go out for an hour; the hotel phone operator says it is a practice blackout. Later, drop in with a British journalist at the Metropolitan bar, where foreign journalists hang out, just in time to get the news of the Franco-British ultimatum.

WEDNESDAY, October 31: Wake up to headlines: EGYPT REJECTS ULTIMATUM and, apropos fighting in Sinai: OUR FORCES IN FULL CONTROL OF SITUATION: MOPPING UP ENEMY. Got to bed early (as I will for next two weeks) because the lights are off most of the time. Distant thump of bombs, rattle of anti-aircraft fire, fireworks display: big golden stars flower, hang almost motionless in the night sky (parachute flares?); pink balls, as from a roman candle, arc up one by one in a long line (tracer bullets?). Wonder if this is an actual air raid or only practice. Still can't believe the British "would do it." (They did.)

Spend half of morning trying to arrange interviews by phone (an inopportune time indeed), give up and go off to the Egyptian Museum (reactions in next month's issue) and the Museum of Modern Art. Latter not at all like its namesake in New York: the

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An Interview with Colonel Anwar El-Sadat

The colonel, one of the dozen officers who with Nasser and Naguib made the 1952 revolution, now edits "Al Gomhouria" ("The Republic"), a new quasi-official daily. I interviewed him in his spacious modernistic office; he wore khaki trousers and an officer's shirt open at the neck, with no insignia. He is a Nubian, in his late thirties, vigorous, debonair and genial, a passionate and dramatic personality.

Colonel Sadat is the chief government ideologue, through his daily column in "Al Gomhouria." He is also the leading spirit in the newly founded Islamic Congress, financed by Egypt and Saudi Arabia. I asked him what, exactly, this does. "We are completely non-political," he replied. "We try to raise the level, both socially and culturally, of Moslem communities all over the world, from Africa to Indonesia. There are contradictions in the Moslem world—some are rich and some are poor. We try to reduce them." (This Marxistic vocabulary was something I ran into fairly often in Cairo.)

Q. What has your régime done in the way of domestic reform?

A. The most important thing is the nationalisation of the Suez Canal.

Q. I mean reforms that will raise the standard of living.

A. We are building our first steel mill, to use ores from Aswan.

Q. You mean the one at Helwan that German firm is building?

A. Yes, they are building it for us.

Q. Why is Egypt's income tax so much lower than England's, and even lower than the American?

A. Things must be done gradually.

Q. In its first two years, your government emphasised domestic reform, but in the last two it has paid most attention to foreign policy. Some people think this is too bad. Do you?

A. I can explain that. Our country was divided in 1952 and 1953—we had the problem of the Moslem Brotherhood, the problem of the Wafd, the problem of the big pashas and landowners who stood for the old order. So we had to spend the first two years uniting the country, strengthening it. If we hadn't, Eden would have beaten us. We took a long time but thanks be to God it has succeeded.

Q. Do you think that if Nasser had not nationalised the canal, the British would have attacked?

A. Yes. President Nasser is the symbol of liberty in this area. The British and French don't want the Arabs to be free.

Q. Do you think Eden planned to occupy all Egypt?

A. Yes. They wanted to come back. They thought it would all be over in forty-eight hours, but (smiling) they didn't know the kind of government we have now. The Oriental Secretary at the British Embassy here, he's the man who's supposed to know all about us, he sent a message into town to get some money or something, the day before they closed the Embassy. When the man came back, he asked, "What's going on in the city?" The man said nothing was. "What, no demonstrations?" said the Secretary. Ho, ho, ho!

Q. Do you think Israel wants to invade and rule over her Arab neighbours?

A. We know *they want our lands. Their own government has announced as an official slogan: FROM THE NILE TO THE EUPHRATES! They say that is what the Bible promises to the Jewish people.**

* Several other Egyptians quoted this alleged official slogan to me. One said it was inscribed over the speaker's rostrum in the Israeli parliament. The nubbin of truth in the story seems to be that one pamphlet put out by a small extremist party in Israel did use the phrase.

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pictures are mostly 19th century or earlier ("modern" in a country six thousand years old begins with the Renaissance—there are several rooms of minor Old Masters) and the building is a mansion in the Arabic equivalent of Victorian Gothic, which, given the Arab love of tortured geometric decoration, gilded and inlaid to the point of frenzy, makes a Victorian parlour look like an interior by Marcel Breuer; there are several rooms of contemporary Egyptian paintings which are proficient but reminiscent.

Outside the Museum, a thin, shabby young Egyptian with burning eyes and a rigid, intense expression comes up to me. "You American?" "Yes." "I know many Americans." Then, glaring ahead grimly: "Welcome to Cairo." We walk along—Egyptians seem to be constantly attaching themselves to me in the street, sometimes with mercantile intentions, but often out of curiosity and a wary sort of friendliness. We have a beer together at Groppi's. He says he graduated two years ago from Cairo University, works as a mail-clerk in the post-office, last week showed the town to the American novelist Vardis Fisher—"We have a friend together, at the University of Minnesota." His English, as is often the case here, is better on the giving-out than on the taking-in end. He made one memorable observation: "English people look scared on the street now. It's funny." Did I detect a gleam of *Schadenfreude* in his rigid face?

Taxi back to hotel. The Cairo taxis are cheap, noisy, efficient. A ride in one combines transportation with the thrills of an amusement park. The drivers are incredibly deft — here is one mechanical skill the Cairenes have mastered—tearing through the narrow streets of the "native" districts relying on horn, brakes, and Allah. A fat old lady, balancing an enormous basket of bananas on her head, comes rushing at one backward, swerves aside at the moment of impact. A donkey cart—a rimless tray on wheels bearing like so many *hors d'œuvre* a half-dozen squatting blackswathed ladies—hurls itself at one sideways, escapes with a convulsive jerk. Traffic policemen, children, thickly-strolling pedestrians in long languid robes play tag with the car. The horn brays almost continuously—here a horn is as essential an automobile part as a carburettor; the slightest *contretemps* produces a wild bawling of horns and loud angry shouts. (Cairenes are noisy and irritable in public; perhaps it is the language, which seems to abound in consonants and gutturals and almost always sounds exasperated.)

At a traffic light, an enterprising Egyptian with a paint-brush and a little pot of blue paint goes from car to car offering to paint the headlights blue. On the very first night of the blackout, most of the headlights were dimmed with blue—they are a quick, resourceful people.

FRIDAY, November 2: Lunching at the St. James today got into talk with a Greek importer and his wife at the next table. They were frightened, depressed. "I've lived here all my life," he said, "but I want to get out. I'm tired of these crises. In forty years, there's never been more than two or three quiet ones and then a new disaster. If it isn't the mob, it's the Russians—the place is full of Poles, Czechs, Chinese, Russians, East Germans. Two years ago the police confiscated all books from Moscow, even Tolstoy; now the shops are full of the stuff; it's well printed and very cheap. If it isn't Farouk, it's Nasser—why couldn't he leave that canal alone? I'm sick of it. I want to get out. How can you build up a business in this kind of country? You can't even get foreign exchange now—the government takes it all for munitions. And what do they do with the arms? Where's the Egyptian air force? They signed a military alliance with Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Iraq just a couple of weeks ago—where are their troops? Have they attacked Israel? It's all mouth—no deeds." Although he had been talking in a low voice, stopping when a waiter was near (this was common practice), his wife became agitated: "*Please*, Cyril! You promised you wouldn't talk so much." She began to describe a trip to Europe they had taken last year—"It was

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expensive but it was worth it. One feels free for a little, one can talk and breathe." A young Egyptian came around collecting for the army; we all dropped something in his coin box. He thanked us. When he had left, the wife said, "It's all right when they are polite." I noted the "they." (Almost without exception, the non-Egyptians I saw in Cairo, even if they had been born there, distrusted the régime, didn't believe the war communiqués, and rather despised the Egyptians.)

After lunch, a distant shouting in the street. We run out. Police sirens, people running from all directions, then, sitting up on the folded-down top of an open touring car, Colonel Nasser, a big, impressive man holding his hand up to the cheers and handclappings, looking as excited as the crowd. "You see," says the Greek lady, "a minute ago nobody. And now. . . ." And there *was* something disturbing in that quick materialisation. "Well, I'm prepared," says her husband, and he opens his coat slightly, gives me a glimpse of a pistol in a shoulder-holster.

Later, in my hotel room, I hear two tremendous, slamming explosions; they sound quite near; people begin to run past; I don't go down to investigate; in a crowd is not at all where I want to be these days. The phone operator tells me a British plane has crashed in the city. I am beginning to wish I had gone out with the other Americans yesterday.*

SATURDAY, November 3: Interview with Hilmy Abdur Ibrahim Rahman, a plump, bright-eyed man who might be a theatrical producer but who is in fact secretary of the Council of Ministers and head of the Atomic Energy Commission. (He is in his mid-thirties, as were two other high officials I met briefly — the Ministers of Finance and Commerce—and as are Nasser and his officers' group. It is a young man's government.) I express surprise that Egypt should have an AEC and that it could afford to build an atomic plant. He: "First you find uses, then the capital comes; at present, we are looking for uranium; of course we are only interested in peaceful uses." For first half-hour we discuss the Nasser reforms. He outlines clearly, enthusiastically, and pedantically the 1952 breaking up of the big landholdings (which seems to be *the* show-piece of reform). He says its effect has been to shift capital investment from land to industry. "For example, we have done a great deal of rebuilding in Cairo, much more than was needed to replace what was burned down in 1952. Apart from happenings in British politics, we are now in an entirely new situation economically." (But, later, the head of the Industrial Bank says all this new building is a waste of capital—luxury flats and expensive office buildings—and so doesn't either help the masses or develop industry; his own office was in a sumptuous new building; Egypt, land of mystery.) Last half-hour, we talk about It. "We are disappointed in Western civilisation," he says. I protest this is too broad: in England itself the Labour Party opposes Eden. He: "They are hypocrites! All hypocrites! Labour behaved imperialistically when it was in power, it created Israel and didn't free Cyprus. The West is decadent. The workers are exploited by the capitalists, so you get Communism, and the whole society rests on the backs of the colonial peoples, who are everywhere freeing themselves. England attacked us because Nasser was developing Egypt and she didn't want competition." (This paleo-Marxist line of thought I found widespread among Egyptians; unhappily Eden's fatuous reversion to

* Actually, nothing happened to me, or to any other foreigner so far as I knew then, during the whole three weeks. I was twice asked for my passport by policemen, politely enough, and otherwise was not bothered, although I walked about the central district almost every day, and—after the cease-fire—made several excursions into the native quarters. There were policemen and soldiers everywhere; one got accustomed to seeing guards with rifles in hotel lobbies and at the entrance to every public building. There were no demonstrations, so far as I know, and the city was always quiet and under control. The government was evidently determined to have no "incidents," and was strong enough — and popular enough — to enforce this policy. And the people, in any case, so far as I could judge, showed no hostility to foreigners in spite of the provocation of the Anglo-Franco-Israeli attack. At no time did I meet with any discourtesy on the streets—quite the contrary, indeed.

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1880-style colonial "police" methods has given an undeserved plausibility to this antiquated way of misunderstanding politics.) I pointed out that, after all, Nasser *had* grabbed the canal. He said Egypt had a legal right to nationalise an Egyptian company, and couldn't seem to see there was more involved.

Later to the big new building, ultramodern in style, of *Al Akhbar*, biggest Cairo daily, to interview Salema Mussa, an important social thinker and propagandist. Mr. Mussa, who writes a column in *Al Akhbar*, is a strong-featured, square-faced, energetic elderly man whom I like at once, perhaps partly because he is a type I know—the old-style socialist. "I am a Westerniser," he says, in halting English. "I lived in London from 1910 to 1914 and published my first book there—*Introduction to the Superman*, about Shaw, Darwin, and Nietzsche. I published here not long ago a book on social Darwinism that sold thirty thousand copies. I have advocated many things—Latin characters for our language, more science and less liberal arts in our colleges. My latest book is called *Reconstruction in English Literature*. It is about new ideas; there are three chapters on Shaw, three on Wells, and one on Ibsen. I am writing a book about Shaw and his ideas. I knew Shaw. Once I asked him, 'How can we get the British out of Egypt?' He said, 'You can't. The only thing to do is to kill them.' " It is tragic and bewildering; so many ties with France and England here—he has a son at Leeds University, and two other Egyptians I interviewed had sons at English colleges—and now such a deep bitterness; hard to blame them after this week's events; but how can these myriad strong links be broken without disaster? "I am suggesting in my column," he says, "that Port Said not be rebuilt for several years, as a memorial to the savagery of 'civilised' peoples. Let the passengers on ships going through the canal see what the British and French have done to us." He seems not worried by the press censorship. The influence of Russia doesn't bother him either: "Communism will never be a problem here. We have two million small land-owners." Like Rahman, he talks in Marxist terms: "Our country was feudal until 1952. We are not progressing toward a kind of socialism. We need at least one thousand factories to make us a civilised nation. . . . Individualism breeds war. We must have either fascism or socialism." He says *Al Akhbar* normally has 200,000 circulation but has had 350,000 since the war began.

THURSDAY, November 8: The cease-fire at Port Said has come, more or less, and the atmosphere is more relaxed. The last week has shown me I am less courageous than I had thought. When I am out on the streets, my animal spirits rise to meet potential "trouble." But alone in my room, especially in the night, when the lights are cut off, anxieties nag, fears twist, for the first time in my life I feel in danger; the idea of death, an end, hitherto academic, takes on reality, and I wish I had left with the American convoy. It's the passivity that is bad, the waiting for something to perhaps happen *to* one. And the isolation. And the insecurity, chancyness, and unpredictability of life here, especially in times of tension. No one really knows what the Cairo mob might do, or why, and those policemen don't inspire confidence. One is literally "at the mercy of events"—a few British bombs in the wrong place, a military disaster, and any white face becomes The Enemy. I once wrote an article, "The Responsibility of Peoples," demonstrating that the concept of collective guilt—punishing individuals for group actions they cannot prevent or don't know about—is abhorrent both ethically and logically. Now I am myself bearing this unjust responsibility. It is a depressing feeling.

Interview with X, an elderly European who has lived here most of his life. Although he has a high quasi-official position and has even become an Egyptian national, he confesses he doesn't understand his fellow-citizens. The Cairo crowd in particular mystifies and alarms him. "In times like these, they don't distinguish between Westerners—even the Russians and the East Germans are

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getting their families out of Cairo. You can be walking down the street, everything peaceful, and an Arab will run after you, shouting, 'He is a spy!' and they may kill you, like that. There is no reasoning, no argument. It is like a pack of dogs—if you show fear or run away, you are lost. But if you act naturally, without concern, they will probably not hurt you. I was driving my car to the garage when the 1952 riots began; the crowd got thicker and thicker; but I kept on, blowing the horn angrily; they made way and I got it in safely. It's only in Cairo and Alexandria that you find this terrible crowd, without morals or stability. Cairo is full of men living on almost nothing; ten piastres (2s.) a day is enough, five or six for food, and they sleep on the streets or in building sites.* They are cowardly, lazy, without respect for themselves or for you. Outside the cities, the people are very different. They are terribly poor, but they are gentlemen. They are courteous and dignified." I ask him about the Nasser revolution. "Like all revolutions, it was begun by idealistic and honest young men, and, like all of them, it is now being taken over by more realistic characters. But it is still less corrupt than under Farouk." He is sceptical about the conduct of the war, doesn't believe Port Said was heroically defended, asks why the air force didn't fight and why the armies of Egypt's Arab allies didn't march. "All this, one simply cannot understand. A totally unaccountable country." He keeps shaking his grey head.

FRIDAY, November 16: Interview with Dr. Abdel Hassouna, secretary-general of the Arab League; he is a UN-type diplomat—eloquent and high-minded; has a son at Cambridge. He says, *inter alia*, that it was Dulles's crack, in turning down the high dam loan, about Egypt's not being a good risk that did it: "Why must Mr. Dulles insult us? He was within his rights to refuse the money. But Colonel Nasser could not accept the slur on our economy. His reply was to nationalise the canal."

The League, which is housed in a large mansion during the construction of its new headquarters, next to the Semiramis on the Nile, seems not to be the sinister outfit I had imagined but more like an American foundation. I am told that it now occupies itself only with social and cultural matters: it recently put on the first Conference of Arab Science, is financing an Arabic translation of Shakespeare, holds Inter-Arab Olympic Games every four years, chivvies backward states like Saudi Arabia and Yemen (both have promised to set up ministries of social service), goes in for seminars, workshops, committees to evaluate problems and committees to evaluate the evaluating committees. While one League official talks earnestly about putting social work in Yemen "on a scientific basis," I notice that his fingers are busy telling his prayer-beads.

Interview with Taha Hussein, Egypt's leading man of letters, in his handsome white house in suburbs. Blind since boyhood, Mr. Hussein has a long, sensitive face; he is married to a French woman and has always been a liberal and a "Westerniser," insisting that Egypt is closer culturally to Europe than to the Orient. But when I ask him, apropos his article in the November 7 *Al Gomhouria* arguing that the British people, and not just the Tories, were "responsible" for Port Said: "But what about the Labour Party's opposition and those mass demonstrations?" he replies: "Eden is a demagogue who has seduced the British people—in England and France you now have dictatorships." *Q.*: "More than here?" *A.*: "Gamal Nasser is leading a revolution. He speaks openly to the people and they are all behind him." And when I ask him why he went to the celebration, at the Soviet embassy, of the anniversary of the 1917 revolution at a time when Russia was suppressing the Hungarian revolution, he said, "I am not informed on what has been happening in Hungary because I have only seen the reports in the British and French press, and they are not trustworthy. Did you know, for example, that performances of

* An Egyptian indignantly denied this. He insisted nobody lived on less than fifteen piastres a day.

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Aida have been forbidden at Covent Garden since we nationalised the canal?" I admit this is news to me. "That is because you were dependent on the London press." Depressing.

Visit to several mosques—there are dozens of famous old ones buried like forgotten dusty jewels in the swarming old city. Most impressive ones are Tulun (9th century), a great square of arcades with massive arches supported on multiple rows of handsomely carved piers, the whole effect severe and noble, and Sultan Hassan (14th century), four gigantic pointed arches enclosing a courtyard, with a large tomb chamber; the decoration here is already more elaborate but is limited to wide bands around the walls, which are plain; a few corners drip that hideous stalactite decor, like a melting honeycomb, which later will infest Arabic architecture. Also visit, across the street, the Al Rifai mosque, 19th century pastiche that echoes Hassan but is drowned in that vulgar over-ornamentation, that senseless proliferation of geometrical designs which blights Arabic buildings of the last few centuries. The Tulun mosque was centuries in advance of anything in Europe, but in the last five hundred years the situation was drastically reversed; Tulun to Al Rifai is a capsule history of Islamic culture.

MONDAY, November 19: Visit to Studio Misr, biggest of the seven or eight Egyptian film companies. A modest establishment two miles from the Pyramids. Smell of disinfectant in the shabby corridors. Received by shark-faced young man in pin-stripe suit who speaks no English; nobody around who does; luckily have a young Egyptian student along who interprets. Pin-stripe says Misr makes about half the thirty feature films now produced annually in Egypt; half their earnings come from export; only two years ago eighty films a year were made but there has been a falling off "because of unsettled world conditions"; a feature costs between £15,000 and £40,000 to make; very low figure, but believable if one has seen any Egyptian films. Shown around by man in cap and dark glasses, like old-style Hollywood director. He is proud of the room in which songs are recorded because it is sound-proofed and of the projection room because it is fire-proofed ("It burned down once—can't do it again!") Sets are filthy, buildings dilapidated, equipment seems meagre; general air of decay and lassitude. Shown half-hour of absurd film called *Zanoba*, starring Samya Gamal ("Gamal" means beautiful, as in Gamal Nasser), once Farouk's favourite belly-dancer. Hero runs into closed door to indicate he is emotionally upset, falls on bed, dreams—eerie music, wall opens, Samya appears, dances, heavy villain materialises, drags her away, hero wakes up, "registers" despair, etc.

In the evening, my last here, an Egyptian friend takes me to L'Atelier, a club of artists and writers and people who like to associate with artists and writers. Although it is only nine, everyone has gone home because of blackout. A typed notice, in French, on the bulletin board: *According to the regulations adopted by the clubs and other social groups of Cairo, all persons of British, French, Australian, or Israeli nationality are herewith dropped from membership.*

. . . . . .

THE next morning I boarded a KLM plane. Among my fellow-travellers was a kindly, earnest German who had come to Cairo to arrange exchange visits of Egyptian and German students; he gave me his card: "Dr. Horst Adamietz, President of the international organisation, FRIENDSHIP ACROSS FRONTIERS, Editor of the monthly magazine, CONTACT INTERNATIONAL"; he was bound now for India to continue the work of promoting world brotherhood. There was also a British engineer, a consultant on some project at Aswan, who said he was one of half a dozen British subjects who had been given exit visas; several hundred others had been expelled: "They picked out the top people—principals of schools, heads of firms—the idea apparently was to do as much damage as possible to British enterprises." I asked him if he had had any trouble on the streets (he was tall and blond); he said no, and added that two British friends of his had lost their

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bags in the Cairo station one night during an air raid and had recovered them, several days later, with the contents untouched, at the Lost & Found office. "That would never have happened before 1952," he observed. I also remember the French businessman, with one of those closely organised French faces in which everything leads up to a masterful nose, who, when I criticised the Eden-Mollet intervention in Egypt, said, "The trouble with you Americans is that you aren't realistic. You don't face facts." He was puzzled when I began to laugh.

As we flew toward Istanbul, I wondered why I hadn't liked Cairo more. Several things had grated. There is the flunkeydom: the subservience to higher-ups—Professor Huzzain's secretary, a portly middle-aged man, stood patiently by for ten minutes with a message, not daring to interrupt The Boss, who in his turn seemed not even to be aware of his subordinate; the littlest big-shot has two or three supernumeraries, in fezzes, always sitting outside his door, their chief duties being to jump to their feet and salute when he or his guests pass by, and to serve tiny cups of Turkish coffee; I was offered coffee at every interview, a pleasant custom, but the unpleasant Westerner wonders whether the coffee-servers couldn't be better employed in a country as poor as this one; this waste of manpower strikes one everywhere—the taxi driver usually has a friend sitting beside him, on every down-town block there are men, with brass armplates from the city, who help park cars in the hope of a piastre or two. There is the laziness and shiftlessness: as in Spain, a siesta problem—how to avoid erosion of work at both ends of the gap in the working day between one and four; despite all the manpower standing around to salute and serve coffee, or just standing around, nobody cleans up the streets or washes down the halls of office buildings or gets after the omnipresent dirt with a duster and scrub pail; the servants are considered so untrustworthy that every door—to wardrobe, china closet, icebox—has a key, and the key is used when the family goes out for the evening; at one mosque I noticed that the *muezzin* was chanting the call to prayer from a ground-floor window, asked why he didn't use the minaret, was told there were too many stairs to climb.

There is, above all, the dust. The fine, yellow-brown Cairo dust that blows off the Mokkatam Hills, that is never washed away because it never rains, that films every leaf and grass blade so that parks and gardens and trees always look slightly withered, that grits underfoot on the pavements and lies thick on the hoods of the big fat Chevrolets that are the currently fashionable automobiles, and eddies wherever there is no pavement and drifts like yellow-brown snow into every fold of Suleyman Pasha's baggy Turkish trousers as he gestures imperiously on his pedestal toward Mustafa Kamel, whose bronze frock-coat and bronze fez are eternally powdered with it as is the steed that Ibrahim Pasha rides, dusty arm outstretched, dusty sword at his dusty side, in front of the dusty-brown opera house they built to celebrate the opening of the canal. Dust to dust, an unnatural land where the buildings, the temples, the people, the streets all seem made out of mud, where water, the life-giving, is death-brown with mud in the dirty Nile, and stagnant, scummy in the irrigation canals, full of terrible diseases with terrible names—bilharzia, ankylostoma. This land where rain never comes to clean and refresh the dusty earth. This vast hospital where 50 per cent. to 75 per cent. of the population are estimated to have one or more major affliction—malaria, pellagra, syphilis, tuberculosis (thirty thousand deaths a year), blindness (highest incidence in the world). This land that has settled longer than any other and that one feels should not have been settled at all.

As I got caught up with my reading of the British and American press—no mail or papers came in from October 29th on—I realised, without undue amazement, that the picture of the war we had been given by the Cairo press was not wholly accurate. There was nothing about the loss of half the Egyptian army and vast quantities of supplies to the Israelis in five days, nothing about

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the Egyptian destroyer that surrendered without a fight off Haifa, nothing about Egyptian planes destroyed on the bombed airfields, nothing about the waverings of the commander at Port Said. On the other hand, we did have full information about the wiping out of several thousand British paratroops, the sinking by Egyptian P.T. boats of a French cruiser and a British troop carrier with six hundred soldiers, the terrible losses of British and French planes (14 shot down on November 2nd, 28 on the 3rd), and the deliberate sinking of block-ships in the canal —by the British. There were also some interesting rumours: that 600 planes were flown in from Russia on November 6th, that the Soviet fleet was steaming through the Bosphorus en route to Port Said, that the U.S. State Department had advised all Americans in France and England to go home at once before they were trapped by World War III, that the British had begun to censor overseas mail, and that five million rifles and pistols had been given out to as many civilians. (There was some truth in the last: civilians at Port Said were armed, as were large numbers of reservists throughout Egypt.)

Our ignorance was awe-inspiring. It was only matched by that of those who conceived the Anglo-French intervention. If the object were to overthrow Nasser—and this is the only relatively sensible one of the many aims that have been announced—the action taken was bound to strengthen him, unless a military occupation of the whole country was contemplated—that is, Cyprus again on a much larger scale. "The British miscalculated the course of evolution," a young student said. "Eden acts as if Egypt is the same as it was ten years ago. It isn't." It isn't indeed. A Farouked-up Egypt—an unpopular, corrupt, inefficient despotism of the old style—might have cracked open under military pressure, but Nasser's Egypt is the new model, combining democratic reforms (or a skilfully contrived show of them) with extreme nationalism. "We have moved toward totalitarianism, this is now the atmosphere. There is complete control by a single man, a cult of The Leader, indoctrination. The Egyptians think there is no other way to get things done." These were the only serious criticisms I heard of the régime from any Egyptian while I was in Cairo. The scholar who made them went on: "But I wish them well. I have to admit that there is no other way at present—the old parliamentary system is hopeless. . . . The war has solidified Nasser's position. I have never seen the people so calm and resolute in a crisis." There was, finally, the Egyptian lawyer who observed: "Eden says 'We are not against the Egyptian people, only Gamal Nasser.' But there are twenty million Nassers here." This, I think, was not only rhetoric. The Nasser régime seems to be genuinely popular, as much for its ultra-nationalism as for its reforms; for two thousand years the Egyptians have been ruled by foreigners—Persians, Macedonians, Romans, Arabs, Turks, Englishmen; they are just beginning to be masters in their own house and the feeling is sweet; Nasser is their man as long as he appears to be standing up to their former alien rulers. Though I sympathise with this reaction, I must admit that twenty million Nassers is, or are, a solemn thought. As is the fact that when Nasser, in the course of his Friday speech in the Al Azhar mosque, the only public address he gave during the fighting, mentioned Bulganin there was what *Pravda* would call "stormy applause," but when he mentioned Egypt's other great supporter of that week, Eisenhower, there was silence.

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Peter Wiles

Two Wandering Satellites

The Polish and Hungarian Experiences

"*A spectre is haunting Eastern Europe, the spectre of humanitarian socialism*"—Edda Werfel.*
"*Do you want to rebuild Warsaw every ten years?*"—Polish Communist.
"*Freedom or death*"—Hungarian patriot.
"*Après moi le dégel*"—attributed to Joseph Stalin.

THE Polish "coup d'état" and the Hungarian Revolution had the same causes: patriotism and the passion for truth and freedom. The patriotism was not always creditable: anti-Russian sentiment is very naturally of the most virulent kind, with many references to Asiatic barbarians, etc. But on the whole both preserved an astonishing moral purity. Poland had less chance to show this than Hungary, where for weeks there was no authority. In a frenzy of anarchic self-discipline the people, including the criminals, stole nothing, beat no Jews, and never got drunk. They went so far as to lynch only security policemen (AVH), leaving other Communists untouched. Nay more, in Györ they arrested all their AVH without loss of life (except, of course, that the AVH had killed three citizens); and all these gentlemen were alive in prison when I was there. The moral achievement is perhaps unparalleled in revolutionary history.

Economic demands played hardly any rôle in Hungary, though workers' delegations to the various governments did of course raise them; the cry was free elections and the withdrawal of Soviet troops. In Poland, on the other hand, the reaction against waste, centralisation, and poverty was a crucial factor, and economists were among the rebellious vanguard of the intellectuals. It was indeed intellectuals of some sort that began both movements, with the industrial workers following them. The peasants had of course never ceased to resist since 1945, but from the nature of things in a dispersed and passive manner. Peasants stop things, they don't start them. Their sole initiative was the astonishing and deeply moving despatch of free food to Budapest after the first Soviet attack had been beaten.

There were, as has already been shown in this journal, very few "captive minds." They were concentrated more in politics than in

* *Przeglad Kulturalny*. November 5th, 1956.

"HUNGARY" →

TWO PAINTINGS BY SIDNEY NOLAN

Sidney Nolan, the Australian artist now working in England, was the subject of an essay by Colin MacInnes, "Sidney Nolan and the Kelly Myth," in ENCOUNTER, December 1955.

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the arts, as one might expect, and there are far fewer today. The really significant conversions* were those of Ochab and Nagy, who from different starting-points moved perceptibly to the "right," and changed the course of history in their respective countries.

My own observations in Poland, which were much more thorough than in Hungary, confirm the leading rôle of youth in this process. The oldest generation was anti-Communist all right, but tired. The middle generation contained not only the fathers of young families but also the weak characters and muddled thinkers. Youth is as irresponsible as age, but not so tired. It was almost unanimously anti-Communist.

In neither country did the revolution bring any fascism to the fore, or any attempt at a "capitalist restoration." No one contests this in the case of Poland. But the opinion that Hungarians are fascists is so common in the West that it must be refuted. I got to know two Hungarian aristocrats well. They had both been brave enough to re-enter the country on foreign passports, and they botl. escaped in the end. Neither was a fascist in the first place, one being a liberal monarchist and the other quite unpolitical. Neither had the least hope or intention of recovering his land. Their sole motives for returning were the natural curiosity of people long exiled and a patriotic desire to help. There was also one "fascist" thrown up inside Hungary by the turmoil of the revolution. This man, Dudas, made the most absurd claims for his own power and importance and seems to have run through the whole gamut of political ideas in the short time available to him. To judge by reports, he was indeed an embryonic fascist of the Poujade type, a violent and ambitious man awaiting his Goebbels. *He was arrested by the Nagy Government.* So much for tales of fascism in Hungary. What there is, is *panache*, a belief in style and good family, a contempt for economics. It is the kind of place that irritates left-wing intellectuals.

As to a capitalist restoration, it was incredible how similar have been the ideas of the Poles and Hungarians for the future economic structure of their countries. Industry is to remain in public ownership, but to be radically decentralised. The independent socialist firms thus created are to decide their own outputs and possibly prices on a free market. Workers' councils are to have considerable powers. In agriculture, there is to be a free peasantry which may *voluntarily* co-operate for certain purposes. Compulsory collective farms are to be abolished, and the crop sold on a free market without compulsory deliveries to the state. Insensate industrialisation and excessive investment are to stop. This sort of programme is indeed a universal reaction to Stalinist economics. It is official in Yugoslavia (which is supposed to be a left-wing anti-Stalinist country) and in Poland (which is supposed to be right-wing); it is the unofficial wish of the overwhelming majority of Hungarians; it is the official policy of Kadar's traitor government (not that that or anything else will win him support); and, one may add, of virtually all resistance groups inside the Soviet Union. This essence of this programme has not to my knowledge been made articulate anywhere: it is that people can only work well in the kind of social set-up that they personally as workers prefer, and that this set-up may well differ from occupation to occupation.

The Polish-Yugoslav programme is immensely attractive. If it delivers the goods it will radiate its influence into almost every country outside the English-speaking world. In particular it will radiate into the U.S.S.R. and threaten the social system there. Yet by a delicious irony the Kremlin must tolerate—nay recommend—the programme, for it is the minimum price payable for the continued existence of satellites at all.

HUNGARY and Poland have much else in common. First, both are Roman Catholic countries. It is true that 30 per cent of the Hungarian population is Protestant, but still Hungary is like Poland in that it

* The liberation of a "captive mind" was poignantly described by the Hungarian writer Julius Hay, as quoted by François Bondy in last month's ENCOUNTER.

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takes its religion very seriously, and Mindszenty is the hero of the whole country. Secondly, there is the common aristocratic-romantic tradition. In both countries the bourgeoisie was mainly Jewish and was regarded as an excrescence upon the social body by the classes above and below it. The aristocracy, no doubt in consequence of this, was extremely numerous and therefore on the whole very poor—a sort of *Lumpenadel* of kulaks with titles. Hence the literary and historical traditions and the social aspirations of the lower classes were always directed towards the aristocratic not the bourgeois virtues. It is aristocratic to defy tanks in Budapest or security policemen in Poznan with your bare hands. The good soldier Schweik, on the other hand, was a bourgeois.

Both countries, again, are "historic nations." In a crisis, every Pole or Hungarian has certain historical symbols and historical moments at the back of his mind to which he can turn for encouragement and example: 1830, 1848, Kossuth, Kosciuszko, etc. Their neighbours are less well provided.

Lastly both countries possessed distinguished National Communists, then out of office, around whom to rally. Happy accidents of history had preserved the lives of both these men, thus proving how right Molotov was in the Vicky cartoon: "I told you so; you should have waited till they were dead before you rehabilitated them." There are no such men in the other satellites.

However, there are also many differences. The Hungarians are a good deal *more* absurd and romantic. A very unpractical nation, they can only achieve the impossible. Their relative lack of economic interest is a case in point. Again, the whole idea of moderation in politics is alien to them. A Hungarian told me what he supposed was a very good story. In 1867, after the Austrian defeat at the hands of Prussia, the Hungarians renewed the demands for independence which they had raised before the war. Surprisingly, they were represented by a lawyer (albeit of very good family), Déak. Déak was a peaceable pipe-smoking man who had taken no part in the 1848 fighting. He went to see the Emperor again. The Emperor said to him, "Well, Mr. Déak, what do you want this time?" With extreme diplomacy he replied, "Nothing more after Sadowa than before, your Majesty." Now in fact his previous demands had been, by Austrian standards, quite excessive, but under the circumstances they were all granted. "And so, you see," said my Hungarian friend, "the joke ran at the time, 'Lawyer Déak has won his case for the Hungarian Nation,'" and he burst into peals of laughter. Brought up on our smooth island story, in which "freedom slowly broadens down from precedent to precedent," I saw nothing whatever funny, and had great difficulty in making him appreciate how significant this was. Alas, more Déak and less Kossuth was just what the nation needed in 1956.

Geography too imposes a restraint upon Poles. To the west of Poland there is efficient Germany, thirsting for reunification, and after reunification for the recovery of the territories which—frankly—Poland stole from her in 1945, expelling eight million Germans. Any Pole can see that the Soviet guarantee of the Oder–Neisse line is a matter of life and death to his country. To the west of Hungary lies neutral, friendly Austria, the home of *Schlamperei* and, since Déak, her historical friend and ally: many on both sides would go so far as actual federation. Indeed, the ghost of the Austro-Hungarian Empire loomed large over the Hungarian Revolution, for however innocently Austrians and Hungarians may discuss federation, the word implies the break-up of Czechoslovakia (Bohemia going to Austria and Slovakia* to Hungary), the cession by Yugoslavia of Croatia and Slovenia, and the cession by Rumania of Transylvania with its huge Hungarian minority;† not to mention the end of Tito's dream to become the centre of a federation himself. So while geography imposes no

* During the Revolution the free Radio Miskolc advocated Danubian federation: Radio Bratislava replied with a stream of abuse in Hungarian, a language it never normally uses. A Czechoslovak station also jammed Radio Györ.

† This minority rioted in sympathy with the Hungarian Revolution.

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restraint on the feelings of the Hungarian in the street, it makes the neighbours very sensitive indeed to what he does.

Thirdly it is very important that Hungary is one third the size of Poland, With twenty-eight million people, Poland is disagreeably large to be a satellite at all. She has more than twenty divisions and an output of eighty MiGs a year. She cannot be shoved around.

But the biggest difference is the bad luck that Hungary had in the chronology of her revolution. First, while Malenkov was boss in the U.S.S.R. there happened to be no stir in Poland, but he brought Nagy to power with him in Hungary. The Malenkov–Khrushchev feud (consumption versus investment, incentives for private peasants versus further collectivisation, state versus party, passive versus active coexistence) reproduced itself more sharply in Hungary between Nagy and Rakosi. When Khrushchev won in February 1955, Rakosi also won, and Stalinism returned with more force in the smaller country. So when in February 1956 Khrushchev made his celebrated de-Stalinising speech, Poland was ready for her first and only thaw. The speech struck shame, inertia, and hesitation into the Polish leaders; the people seized the opportunity, and the thaw developed gradually and naturally. In Hungary, on the other hand, Rakosi and Gerö dammed it up until the terrible explosion of October.

To be fair to Gerö, he made substantial concessions between July (when he succeeded Rakosi as first secretary) and October. He arrested four particularly hated AVH men; reduced the compulsory teaching of Russian in schools; decentralised the planning system; eased the lot of independent craftsmen; and even experimented with workers' control. Above all he took no action when writers exercised a more than Polish freedom of speech. Hungarian writers were even more important and gave an even bolder lead than Polish: they actually demanded no censorship at all, and the punishment of Stalinists. Indeed, even under Rakosi there had been the so-called Petöfi club—a series of professional meetings of economists, writers, journalists, etc. in which they could blow off steam. The journalists' night at the club was the main thing that persuaded the Kremlin to throw out Rakosi—"little Poznan" they called that night. But there was not the feeling, so pronounced when I was in Poland, that the party was behind the thaw, that there had been a change of heart at the top. The Hungarians felt their thaw was in defiance of their party. A Pole thinks of a Polish Communist as a queer kind of Pole, a Hungarian thinks of his as a Russian agent. The Poles have unanimously collaborated in the rebuilding of their country, consoling themselves with the achievements for the waste and misery. They say, "We built Nowa Huta"; the Hungarians say, "They built Sztalinvaros" (these are the two great Communist steel towns). Above all, Gomulka was obviously on the way back, while the fall of Rakosi merely brought Gerö.

Then, for some reason, Polish Communists are genuinely the nicest Communists in the world. It is difficult to see why. The only plausible explanation is that during the Great Purge Stalin developed one of his paranoid obsessions against the Polish party and physically liquidated the whole leadership, subsequently dissolving the party as such. Consequently a majority of Polish Communists, even at top levels, were people who had distinguished themselves during the wartime resistance or had at least been too junior before the war to be thoroughly Stalinised. Be that as it may, your typical Polish Communist is a decent but fanatical type who actually takes humanitarian Communism seriously. There is even a large body of Polish intellectuals who believe that Gomulkaism can be developed into a watertight ideology, and are willing to make very bold experiments to that end. Hungarian Communists, on the other hand, are all Stalinists or nobodies, and probably even before the recent events there was a smaller proportion of Communists anyway. Now, of course, there are no Stalinists and no nobodies either: just the AVH and the cabinet.

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The next point of difference is easily misunderstood. Rakosi, Gerö, and Hegedüs are all Jews. In these two countries, so deeply disgraced by anti-Semitism, many Jews naturally react by being anti-Polish or anti-Hungarian as the case may be. I suggest that, in a crisis, Hungarian Jews like Gerö and Hegedüs would experience less emotional hesitation before calling in the Red Army than a pure Pole like Ochab. For it did so happen that at the critical moment Poland was governed by Polish and not Jewish Stalinists. There were Jews in the Polish Politburo, but Moscow, itself extremely anti-Semitic, never liked to give them the top places, and it so happened that in Poland it did not have to. It chose Ochab, who actually went over to the anti-Stalinists at the critical moment. His rôle was thus much more decisive than that of Gomulka, whom he could easily have arrested. One would like to know what went on in his mind. The difference between Ochab and Gerö is the crux of the difference between Poland and Hungary.

As opposed to Hungary, Poland has had two sharp lessons on the futility of armed uprisings; the Warsaw uprising against the Germans in 1944 (the reader will remember that the Russians waited upon the opposite bank of the Vistula until it was crushed) and the unplanned workers' uprising of Poznan in June 1956. This latter was put down by *Polish* forces and had no direct or visible consequences beyond the city of Poznan. Its importance was to be an awful warning to the people and to increase the disgrace and embarrassment into which Khrushchev's secret speech had already plunged the Polish Stalinist leadership.

Then again Gerö was only a few hours back from Yugoslavia when he had to make his broadcast to the rioting population. The Hungarian Revolution had begun in the absence of most of the Politburo. Indeed it is very doubtful whether the radio would have given such prominence to the events in Poland, translating Gomulka's speech in full and topping off the programme with the "Marseillaise," had the Politburo been present in the country. It was these broadcasts that incited the students in Budapest to meet and make demands on Monday, October 22nd. On Tuesday morning the students had brought out the whole town, and it was not until then that Gerö returned to his capital. When we are very frightened and perplexed, we revert to the simple wisdom we absorbed at our mother's knees; Gerö reverted at the microphone to pure Stalinism, thereby turning the demonstrations into a revolution.

Finally Hungary has been ill served by the other personalities in the affair. Nagy is a man with a less distinguished past, a less powerful intellect, and fewer gifts of leadership than Gomulka. He has played his part manfully and history will be kind to him. But he will not go down as a great man. The contrast is even more striking between Mindszenty and Wyszynski. It was not tactful of Mindszenty to say to a German journalist during the revolution that the greatest bulwark in Europe against Communism was a reunited and rearmed Germany. Undeniable of course, and Mindszenty must be excused because he is himself *volksdeutsch* (his name was Pehm until 1945), but there are times and places for saying such things. Again he should never have gone for safety to the Americans. Cardinals in Communist countries should take refuge in Italian legations. Mindszenty has courage, he is of the stuff of which martyrs are made; Wyszynski is of the stuff of which cardinals are made. Radio Warsaw now broadcasts his sermons weekly.

So for all these reasons the Polish "coup d'état" pursued its course as a purely intra-party struggle, with the people acting as a Greek chorus, albeit a very one-sided one, while the Hungarian party struggle, similar as it was up to the point of the second Soviet intervention, followed in the wake of a popular explosion. For all Hungarian politicians it was a case of *je suis leur chef, il faut que je les suive*. After Gerö's initial mistake, the Hungarian Revolution could not have been controlled by *anyone*, especially not, inciden-

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tally, by a bourgeois politician. Many people have tried to blame these renascent bourgeois parties for the Hungarian débâcle, but neither they nor the so-called National Committees (the more or less non-political *ad hoc* bodies in the provinces) ever made such extreme demands as, for instance, the Hungarian miners who demanded that the Soviet troops retire from the country flying the white flag. Possibly only Mindszenty could have calmed the population. But it would be quite unfair to blame him for not doing so: nobody asked him to. We must never forget that we thought Hungarian heroism had won the day, that the country was in fact free. Such was the opinion of half the Soviet experts known to me, and of Losonczy and Tildy, two members of Nagy's last cabinet, at a press conference six hours before the Soviet aggression. It was the writer's own opinion—he will not forget against himself that when he saw his first Soviet tanks west of Györ on November 2nd he said, "Ah, Soviet tanks; we needn't be frightened of *them*." A majority of the ordinary Hungarian people thought otherwise. These saw that it wasn't a question of ideology but of simple imperialism and military prestige. How else, speaking with hindsight, could the Red Army have reacted? It had lost Poland a fortnight before, and seen its pro-consul there humiliated; and now it had been defeated by schoolchildren in Hungary. Its whole satellite empire was crumbling. So it brushed the politicians aside.

These same ordinary Hungarians, however, made the most unacceptable demands, and cut off any retreat behind their politicians. In particular Nagy himself cannot be blamed. He was only hoisted into power two days after the explosion began. It was interesting and tragic to watch his evolution under the pressure of events from a Gomulkaite into a positively anti-Soviet Communist, proclaiming his country's neutrality and denouncing the Warsaw Pact. After their three weeks' ordeal, the Nagyites must be the most right-wing Communists in the world. If in foreign policy they do not differ so widely from Tito, in home policy they are far to the right of Gomulka since they actually accept free elections and the permanent prospect of the Communist Party being one among many.

In Poland the people never got on top of the politicians. There was instead a vicious, silent struggle between two party factions, each trying to lay their hands upon the levers of power. The larger, the Gomulkaite faction, had only to wait until the newly called meeting of the Central Committee took place; that once in session, they could sit back and let the "Leninist norms of party legality" take their course—they knew that they had a majority. The Stalinist Natolin group* had a minority on the Central Committee, so they had to try for a *coup d'état* in the meantime. Their leaders, Zenon Nowak and Witaszewski, the Army's chief political Commissar, prepared a list of names of Gomulkaites whom it would be necessary to arrest. It appears that Witaszewski actually gave orders to this effect, not to the Security Police over whom he had no control, but to the Army; and was simply disobeyed. The only other card to play was troops in large numbers, as at Poznan. Marshal Rokossowsky, who of course also belonged to this group, actually called out the Polish Army for "seasonal manœuvres," or possibly "to help with the potato harvest." But that was a desperate throw and it was already too late; the Central Committee was in session and the Marshal was ordered to return his troops to barracks.

Moreover, force had not been lacking on the other side. The majority also had its conspiracy. In the summer the militarised Security *Troops* ("KBW," to be distinguished from the Security *Police*—"UB") had been put under command of General Komar, a Communist Veteran of the Spanish War who had fallen victim to Stalinism. Komar is said to be a personal friend of Cyrankiewicz, who was of course strongly on the side of Gomulka since he is himself an ex-Socialist and no true Communist at all. The KBW straddled all the approaches to

* Named after Natolin, a suburb of Warsaw. Compare Cliveden.

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Warsaw. Even the UB took Gomulka's side —and why not? Torturers and hangmen are not necessarily unpatriotic, or extreme in their political views. Also the secretary of the Warsaw Party organisation, Staszewski, arranged for arms to be delivered to various factories in Warsaw and ensured an unofficial bodyguard for Gomulka until the Central Committee should meet. Thus the Natolin group knew that the Polish Army would meet with physical resistance in Warsaw. But the experience of Poznan shows that the army is only just sufficiently reliable to restore Stalinist order if it is not actually called upon to fight.

How did Poland fight off Soviet intervention, it may be asked? The answer is, by breaking no law and threatening force against those who did. There was no state law, international treaty, or, above all, party statute saying that Poland shall obey the Kremlin. There was no formally valid objection if the Central Committee chose to reinstate Gomulka or sack Rokossowski. By Leninist tradition—not seldom violated by Lenin himself, but never mind—the Kremlin keeps its control by influence and (for Communism is a highly rationalistic creed) by being obviously right all the time. The Stalinist perversion was to use threats, lies, and force: but illegally. Stalin never laid down an official *Fuehrerprinzip* or declared, even in a secret protocol, satellites to be colonies. Just one proof out of many: the Soviet ambassador interfered in every possible way, but he was still only an ambassador. So far from being a viceroy he was not even *ex officio* doyen of the diplomatic corps. When there was real hatchet work to be done—e.g. at the enthronement of Ochab or Gerö—a VIP always came from Moscow. In just this way we sent out a general to bring Jordan into the Baghdad Pact—our methods of control over Jordan were very similar.

Control by informal violence could perhaps only be worked by one man. It withered with the death of the political genius who invented it. The committee of Stalin's successors had only to re-establish the "Leninist norms of party legality" for Poland to be lost. All that Ochab and Gomulka had to do was have strong nerves and rest upon their rights. But the Kremlin could not permit it twice, and in Hungary they did indeed revert to Stalinism, lying as the old man himself had never lied, and using force on a scale that would have made him lift his eyebrows. In particular they broke the law: the Kadar government never invited their troops back on November 4th. That this is a lie, I am myself an ear-witness. I was awakened by firing at 5.15 a.m., and heard Nagy make his last broadcast as Prime Minister, demanding resistance, at about 5.45; by which time Soviet tanks were already on the Danube. The Kadar government was not in existence until later that day. These operations were thus a clear aggression—not the only one in the world during those days.

WHAT of the future? Of Hungary one can only say that it will either become another Finland or remain under Soviet military government, however disguised. The chips are down all round: there is no possibility of restoring a "People's Democracy." Terror will of course be accompanied by economic concessions; these are an invariable Kremlin specific after revolutions.

In Poland prophecy is permissible: for all his great gifts and services to the nation, Gomulka is the Kerensky of Polish liberalism. For first, what is the status of party dogma if party members are to be intellectually free? A young party intellectual, Kolakowski, has given the only possible non-Stalinist answer* to this question: *basic* dogma is not threatened by the freedom of its acolytes, simply because it is objectively true and reason will always reveal it to be so. *Fides quaerens intellectum!* We must reply to this modern Abelard that the human mind is naturally inquisitive and Marxist dogma is in fact false; therefore Gomulkaism is a purely transitory phenomenon.

A second question of equal importance in Poland is formal democracy. Should there, for one thing, be opposition parties? There

* *Nowe Drogi*. September, 1956.

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exist indeed rump fellow-travelling parties, which are now taking on new life. Some Roman Catholics are also demanding something new and less compromised. So is Professor Hochfeld, who counts in Poland as a good Communist. Gomulka's own speech to the Central Committee strongly hints at the same, at any rate for peasants. It is difficult to see on what non-Stalinist, i.e. honest, grounds the whole apparatus of parliamentary elections and formal democracy can be maintained unless an opposition party is eventually formed. Moreover this is not the only thin end of the Western democratic wedge. There is already a strong movement to revitalise the Parliament as such, thus splitting sovereignty between it and the Central Committee; and at that there are to be more candidates than seats at the next general elections. So the membership of this co-sovereign body can no longer be predetermined.

Above all there is the growth of democracy inside the Communist Party itself. This is vital: in what ways, it may be asked, is the State of Poland less democratic than that of Mississippi, U.S.A.? In both, one party has the monopoly of power. In both, much of the population is excluded from power on grounds difficult to justify. In both, there is to a great extent freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and the rule of law, though these things are more highly developed in Mississippi since the single party there makes fewer totalitarian claims. The essential difference is that in Mississippi this party has democratic primary elections, while in Poland it co-opts its members and chooses its leaders by indirect election only. Nevertheless a single party, if its inner life is not totalitarian, cannot avoid embracing very many trends at work in the community, and these indirect elections up and down the Polish party (*congé d'élire* from above having been abolished, of course) will come to mitigate Polish totalitarianism much as Democratic primaries mitigate white supremacy in Mississippi.

So here again Gomulkaism is seen to be a purely temporary phenomenon. This is not to say the same of Gomulka. "Now come along, rally round, chaps, and let's all be *nice* Communists together," he is in effect saying. But why should they? Most probably, popular and intellectual pressure will nudge him to the right, as it did Nagy, who ended up as the *reductio ad democraticum* of Gomulkaism, a Communist presiding over a many-party system. Or he may be replaced—after a Russo-Polish war—by someone more Stalinist. Such a war is still very much on the cards, and the first duty of Western politicians is to prepare for it. But all this refers only to the political and intellectual sides of Gomulkaism. As an economic and social structure we have seen that it is perhaps the most stable in the world, and will radiate, under whatever name, far beyond Poland.

IN ORIGIN, Tito is very different. A left-wing Communist, he was the boss of the most fanatical and most quickly "socialised" of all Stalin's satellites, while Gomulka was and is the man of the right *par excellence*. In particular, they disagreed over the foundation of the Cominform, which was—ironically—one of Tito's pet schemes. In face of the Kremlin, however, National Communism is inevitable whether it be of the right or of the left. Both resisted. Gomulka was—temporarily—liquidated, Tito won through: there was not enough Soviet force to kidnap him or browbeat his Central Committee. But the antagonism between the two seems to have persisted. Tito hardly spoke a kind word about Poland until after Hungary; and at top levels in Poland one hears no compliments the other way. Nor have there yet been exchanges of VIP visits, as between Yugoslavia and all other satellites.

But the hard facts seem to be effecting a *rapprochement*. Be he never so left-wing, Tito had to dissolve his collective farms and abolish compulsory deliveries — a typical Gomulkaite policy. In industry, Tito pressed on towards his own conception of "full Communism": the state "withered away" as planning was decentralised, price and output decisions were left to the free market, and—above all—workers' councils took more and

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more managerial power. This anarcho-syndicalism fits more easily into left-wing Communist ideas (a right-winger would prefer state capitalism counterbalanced by normal trade unions); yet Gomulka is imitating it. What else can he do? It is what his workers want. And in foreign policy a *rapprochement* is, of course, inescapable.

Tito remains, however, a totalitarian. *He* is no Kerensky: he keeps his Djilas under lock and key. His press and literature are as unreadable as any—quite different from Polish writing, which presents as fascinating and frank a tension between freedom and authority as Greene or Mauriac. His party is as monolithic as well can be, and there is a sizeable personality cult to boot. The reason for all this is his left-wing origins, which need more explanation. For reasons just given, it is difficult to be sure what social and economic policies are "left-wing Communism" any more. Anarcho-syndicalism in industry was certainly one such but the right have now taken it up too. The further collectivisation of farming is left-wing in the U.S.S.R., but plain lunacy in the satellites. Decentralisation and a free market are as much right as left. So in satellite domestic policy, there is really no left and right any more; there is Stalinist and post-Stalinist.

But Tito and Gomulka do go back to the days when "left" and "right" had meaning in domestic policy; Tito favoured collectivisation and investment, Gomulka private peasants and consumption. And with these domestic attitudes went a "hard" and a "soft" line on much else besides: intra-party democracy, attitude to the West, attitude to socialists, use of security police, literary censorship, etc. Tito is a totalitarian optimist in a hurry: the people can be *educated* into "full Communism." Gomulka is like Bukharin, a tolerant pessimist (Stalin was also a pessimist but not tolerant—he *forced* socialism on the people). So "left" is "hard" and "right" is "soft." It follows that *it is more difficult to de-Stalinise towards the left than towards the right.* Human nature lies on the right. For instance, how can the party cease to be monolithic without near-socialist opinions cropping up? Or, if you discard the word hyena, whom do you stop using it about? There are not many Trotskyites outside Ceylon; only capitalists, peasants, and social-democrats exist to be not called hyenas.

Yugoslavia, then, remains a closed society while Poland is open to every wind that blows. National Communism is not the same as de-Stalinisation. Tito is a watered-down Stalin, while Gomulka is a charismatic leader of the Lenin type. Tito is at once more stable and less attractive than Gomulka: his dreams of Balkan federation shattered, his uniqueness duplicated, his appearance of decency and moderation exposed as a sham by the Polish reality, his protégé (Kadar) and his patron (Khrushchev) both discredited.

But let us end by praising famous men. How correct all this shows Stalin to have been! He too might have given in to Gomulka on October 20th; he too might have hesitated in Hungary on October 30th. He always did respect force, as Finland shows, and retreat from weak positions, as in Persian Azerbaijan. But he would never have let it all begin. Stalinism has not been proved impracticable: only 75 per cent Stalinism, administered by a committee of 50 per cent and 90 per cent Stalinists in permanent disagreement—only Stalinism without Stalin. The sword is still mightier than the pen, but only if it is vigilant and quick.

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Colin Wilson

"On Margate Sands . . ."

An Autobiographical Fragment

WHEN I was eleven years old, my grandfather gave me a tattered and coverless science-fiction magazine. (This was in the second year of the War, and I had never seen such a thing in my life before.) It was in this that I discovered a name I had never heard: Albert Einstein. It was difficult to determine, from the references in the stories, precisely what Professor Einstein had done, but every writer in the magazine mentioned him at least once, and the Letters to the Editor were sprinkled with his name.

The stories themselves excited me more than anything I had ever read. They were mostly about experiments that got Out of Hand. There was one about a scientist who made a speck of grey protoplasmic matter, which somehow got thrown into the sea, and grew larger as it ate up the fishes, until finally it developed a habit of engulfing passenger liners or depopulating small islands. There was another about a scientist who made an Atomic Fire that was inextinguishable, and went on burning until it threatened to burn up all the world.

I had never read anything like it; compared to boys' papers and comics, it was erudite and intellectual. And one had a feeling of far more serious issues at stake than in stories about football games and ragging in the lower fourth. (Yarroo, you rotter! I'll tell old Quelchy!) There was talk about positrons and cyclotrons and the theory of probability. Not to mention Professor Einstein.

I found Einstein's own little volume: *Relativity, the Special and General Theory*, and conscientiously plugged through it, skipping the maths and wondering what the devil he meant by "orientation." But Sir James Jeans was simpler; his explanation of the Michelson Morley experiment simplified everything. From then on I thought I understood relativity. I enjoyed a certain amount of consideration among the boys at school as a consequence of tangling up the physics master in obscure questions about the speed of light in a moving co-ordinate system. They nicknamed me Professor, and relied on me to waste as much of our physics lectures as possible by objecting that Newton was out of date and discredited. But secretly I admired Newton, for I imagined him as the second term in a hierarchy—Archimedes, Newton, Galileo, Planck, Einstein—which would one day include myself.

But the questions that science posed for me did not confine my curiosity. It is Sir James Jeans who begins *The Mysterious Universe* with a passage that might have been a sermon on Pascal's text: "The eternal silence of these infinite spaces terrifies me." This, and other

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such passages of speculation, produced a sense of mystery that was so intolerable to me that I once wrote a twenty-page letter to Sir Arthur Eddington, asking him if he could please explain to me what the universe was all about. When I asked the local librarian where I could find his address, she told me that he had died earlier in the year. I was not entirely disappointed. I had come to the conclusion that he wouldn't know the answer anyway. This was in 1944.

In some popular textbook of psychology, I had read summaries of the systems of Freud, Jung, and Adler. Freud's insistence on childhood influences and the sexual urges seemed even then to be nonsense; Jung's theory of types struck me as equally irrelevant. But Adler's idea of the power-instinct came to me as a revelation; it seemed to tie together all my observations of human beings; to add the final touch to the edifice that Einstein had begun. A great deal of a child's time is spent in being treated unfairly and wondering about the rights and wrongs of the case; also in observing that, although all adults seem to him to be equally self-possessed and balanced in judgment, yet there are some who are badly spoken of by others —labelled shifty or dishonest or stupid by one's parents. It is all very confusing. It leads the child to realise that he cannot leave the business of making judgments entirely to the adult world. And when such a child tries to form his own judgments, the real confusion begins. In most issues between adults, there doesn't seem much to choose. It seems less a matter of rights and wrongs than of individuals with their own Will to self-assertion. So my summary of the situation went like this: "right" and "wrong" are relative terms; they have no final meaning; the reality behind human conflicts is only a Will to self-assertion. Nobody is right; nobody is wrong; only *everyone* wants to be thought right.

Adler's use of the term "inferiority complex" supplied me with my fundamental idea. I decided that all human life was a drive towards a *superiority complex*. The desire of every human being is an attempt to appear in as good a light as possible to himself. And since the opinions of other people affect your way of seeing yourself, then the aim becomes to establish an equilibrium of complacency by making other people respect or like you. Of course, there was another way; to cut yourself completely off from the opinion of other people and build a wall around your own self-esteem. The lunatic who believes he is Napoleon or Christ has done this—so I felt. The difference between the lunatic and the sane person is only that the sane person prefers to get other people to co-operate to maintain his delusions.

There came a day when I took up a pen and settled down to writing a long essay about these ideas. I began it in a new school notebook that has written inside the cover "Colin Wilson, Form 2C," and underneath it, in block capitals printed in red ink: "These notes are based on the relativity theory of Albert Einstein, and the system of Individual Psychology of Alfred Adler."

The writing of that essay was an unforgettable experience. Years later, when I read in *The Varieties of Religious Experience* of Jouffroy's experience of terror in analysing his own unbelief, I remembered that night in 1944 when I wrote my "Essay On Superiority" in a single sitting. It seemed that I had penetrated deeper into unbelief than any other human being; that by questioning too deeply, I had cut myself off from the rest of the human race. My brother came to bed in the same room while I wrote. Towards 3 o'clock in the morning, I turned off the light and climbed into bed beside him, feeling at the same time an awful fear that God would strike me dead in the night. I felt that I had destroyed in myself a certain necessary basis of illusion that makes life livable to human beings. I had done this in the name of "truth"; and now I felt no elation, only a sort of fatigue of the brain that would not let me sleep. Truth, it seemed, had no power of intensifying life, only of destroying the illusions that make life tolerable.

I still remember my surprise when I woke in the morning and found I was still alive. God either didn't care, or didn't exist.

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THIS was the beginning of a long period in which the key word, for me, was "futility." During this period, I felt that "futility" was the final comment on human life. It was the worst and most depressing period of my life. At thirteen I should have had friends—especially girl-friends. Instead, I spent three years in my bedroom, reading and writing. When I read some sage or philosopher proclaiming that human beings are hopelessly deluded, I wondered what reason he should have for saying so except a deluded wish to be admired for his cynicism. Human life seemed a vicious circle; the desire for life a delusion. I asked myself: Who made the delusion? and decided that, whatever inscrutable aim inspired the Great Delusion-Maker, it regarded human futility and vanity as its basic necessity. I was not even certain that the Great Delusion-Maker himself might not be inspired by delusions.

I wrote as an antidote to misery or boredom. I became ashamed of the "Superiority" essay, and wrote more essays in which I sought a more technical terminology. The central theme was always the same: that men are machines driven by emotions, that the "desire for truth" is always some less creditable urge disguised by the emotions; that "truth" would be as useless to human beings as bookcases are to cows. I find the two little notebooks of "Subjective Essays" filled with speculations on the nature of human impulses. In the essay on Fanaticism, I state that the fanatic is the luckiest of all living beings, for he is driven by the most intense delusions. And somewhere in the essays, I acknowledge that free will may exist, but in such a small degree as to be hardly knowable.

I had other amusements that kept me from complete abdication of Will. From the age of eleven, physics and chemistry had been my major interests, and by the age of twelve I had made the spare room into a laboratory in which I spent most of my weekends and evenings; the pocket money I earned from a paper round was spent on chemicals. Then, in the August holiday of 1944, I conceived the idea of writing a book which would summarise, in formulæ and laws, all my knowledge of chemistry and physics. The scheme fascinated me so much that I soon made it more ambitious, and decided to do chapters on Astronomy, Geology, Psychology, Aeronautics, Philosophy, and Mathematics. I had bought, at some church bazaar, six volumes of a self-educator with "courses" on all these subjects. With the help of this and books from the local library, I began my attempt to summarise all the scientific knowledge of humanity. I wrote it in notebooks that held about fifteen thousand words each, and had filled six of these before it was time to go back to school. It was my first book, and I worked on it continuously and systematically. It was the best possible training for a writer; since then, I have come to regard it as the indispensable training of a writer in our present age.

IN THOSE years of the "Subjective Essays," the greatest impact on my mind was Bernard Shaw.

I had seen Gabriel Pascal's film of *Cæsar and Cleopatra* without being particularly impressed; he reminded me too much of Shakespeare, and I had always found Shakespeare unreadable. But during the first week of the BBC's Third Programme, I switched on the radio one evening to hear Mr. Esmé Percy's voice declaiming:

"Friends and fellow brigands. I have a proposal to make to this meeting. We have now spent three evenings in discussing the question: Have Anarchists or Social democrats the most personal courage? We have gone into the principles of Anarchism and Social democracy at great length. The cause of Anarchy has been ably represented by our one Anarchist, who doesn't know what Anarchism means. . . ."

It was the beginning of the third act of *Man and Superman*. Even now, after more than ten years, I find it impossible to read this act without a curious feeling of awe. It was a totally new experience. I will not pretend that I was enthralled: I was not. I was partly bored, and could not follow a lot of it. But I was astounded that another man had

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actually thought and written about the problems that preoccupied me. Up till then, I had had a little private game with myself in which I examined everyone I met and tried to decide how close they were to seeing the world as I saw it; there was always an element of congratulation in the fact that I felt certain no one ever had. . . . I was already beginning to enjoy that first terror of feeling myself completely alone. It has become a commonplace of my thinking that no man asked himself what life was about; or if he did, answered with arrant nonsense or wishful thinking. (I once asked my grandfather—during an argument about the existence of God—if he understood the purpose of life, and he told me solemnly that he did, and that he would explain it to me when I was fourteen. Nothing I could say would draw him out. Unfortunately, he died when I was eleven.) Now I heard Shaw speaking quite plainly about the purpose of life, and answering that it was a Will to self-understanding. It sounded plausible. It seemed paradoxical enough. And the devil expressed my central obsession: with the idea of futility, purposeless repetition:

". . . Where you now see reform, progress, fulfilment of upward tendency, continual ascent by Man on the stepping stones of his dead selves to higher things, you will see nothing but an infinite comedy of illusion. You will discover the profound truth of the saying of my friend Koheleth, that there is nothing new under the sun. *Vanitas vanitatum*. . . ."

And Don Juan interrupts impatiently:

". . . Clever dolt that you are, is a man no better than a worm, or a dog than a wolf, because he gets tired of everything? Shall he give up eating because he destroys his appetite in the act of gratifying it?"

I went to bed that night with a sort of mental numbness. I felt that something of tremendous importance had happened to me, but that I would not know it yet, as one doesn't feel the loss of a leg by frostbite until the blood circulates again. Sometime during that night, I woke up and put out my hand to my brother; the bedclothes had slipped off him and he was as cold as tin. For a moment I believed him dead, and it seemed the natural and inevitable result of knowing too much and prying too deep. It was an immense relief when I covered him up and he got warm again; and as much a surprise, in its way, as the morning I woke up and found I was still alive.

I LISTENED to the repeat of the play the following evening: all six hours of it; and borrowed it from the local library and read it through the day after that. I think that no other forty-eight hours of my life have given me such a sense of a mental earthquake. Subsequently I read through all the plays (although not, at that time, the prefaces). The English master at school told me that an admiration for Shaw was something that often "happens" in the 'teens, and disappears after five years or so. I find that, after twelve years, Shaw still seems to me the greatest figure in European literature after Dante.

But Shaw was less of a mental tonic than might be expected. At that time, a sense of exhaustion, greyness, seemed to wash around on the edge of my mind. I made a habit of wandering into churches and engaging the priest in arguments about the existence of God and the purpose of life. Sometimes, if the argument went on too long, I left the church feeling a little dizzy, and with an underlying certainty that stupidity and futility were the unescapable warp and weft of living. These periods of depression sometimes lasted for days. (One such priest, I remember, advised me to read nothing but newspapers for a year, telling me that I was suffering from mental indigestion from reading too much. I was delighted later when, in Fox's *Journal*, I read about the priest of Mancetter who advised him to take tobacco and sing psalms.) I had passed beyond my period of militant atheism. The idea that there was no God no longer gave me a feeling of freedom. In my childhood, I'd been greatly given to praying mentally while I walked around; I was incorrigibly a talker, and enjoyed keeping up a one-sided conversation when there was no one else to talk to; frequently apolo-

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gising to God when my attention got distracted and I lost the thread of the discussion. Now I would have been glad to pray—except for the gloomy certainty that it would be mere emotional dishonesty. I had begun to read T. S. Eliot's poetry at this time, stimulated by some remark of the French master about his obscurity. In the first few lines I read, I found the words:

"And I pray that I may forget
These matters that with myself I too much discuss
Too much explain"

and:

"Teach us to care and not to care
Teach us to sit still."

Immediately I felt I knew what he was talking about. After that, I tended to repeat "Ash Wednesday" as a form of mental prayer. It provided a sort of antidote to the depression and exhaustion that Shaw could not provide.

WHEN I was sixteen, I left school, having passed my school certificate. I had wanted to take some job where I could study for a B.Sc. (My chief ambition was still to be a scientist.) Unfortunately, I needed five credits to be exempt from matriculation; I only had four, and had to take the maths exam again. In the meantime, I took a job in a warehouse; it involved weighing crates of wool when they came into the warehouse, keeping a number of girls and machines supplied with hanks of wool, and "weighing out" the wool when it has been wound on to spools. I was not particularly miserable in the work, but it was longer hours than I had ever worked before—from 8 till 6, with an hour for lunch—and heavier work. After a while, the job began to bore me, and I tried various remedies to counteract my growing detestation for it; I read a great deal of poetry because I found it relaxed me and refreshed me; I planned short stories and a long play while I worked, and wrote them in the evenings. After two months, I passed my maths exam with the necessary credit, and left the warehouse without regrets. I hated hard work. In comparison my new job as a laboratory assistant at the school I'd just left seemed like a holiday.

But I now found that I had lost all interest in science. I had written three acts of an immensely long play, designed as a sequel to Shaw's *Man and Superman*, and was convinced that I could make a living as a writer. I had my first short story published at about this time—it was in a factory magazine printed in Yorkshire. An uncle who worked in Durham had submitted the story for me, and the editor had written saying he thought I had talent, and would be glad to receive further contributions. The magazine collapsed about a month later, but by then I had conceived and begun to write another half-dozen short stories and some one-act plays. I wrote a long dialogue, set in the temple at Jerusalem, between Jesus (16 years old) and a member of the Sanhedrin, putting my own arguments into Jesus' mouth, and the views of the priests I'd talked to into the old man's. (I left this lengthy play on a bus shortly after I'd finished it and never recovered it.)

I was causing an increasing dissatisfaction among the science masters at school. I spent most of my "study time" in the library, writing plays and short stories, and most of my physics and maths lectures reading *The Pickwick Papers* under the desk. It is a sign of the patience and amiability of the headmaster that no one called me to account until the yearly exams made it impossible to ignore my complete loss of interest in science. Even then, I was exhorted to reform my ways, and told that I could stay on conditionally. I explained that I wanted to be a writer. They sympathetically paid me two months' wages and sacked me.

It would be untrue if I gave the impression that my term as a lab-assistant was a period of peace and relaxation. I found too much leisure more of a nuisance than too little, and suffered agonies of boredom. I had a standing feud with the physics master, who had great patience for inflicting petty indignities. I frequently took days off, alleging illness, and spent them cycling out to Warwick or Matlock or Nottingham to work off my surplus energies. The periods of depression came

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more frequently and lasted longer. I had begun to keep a Journal, inspired by some BBC programme about Marie Bashkirtseff. Now I filled page after page every evening with expressions of my boredom and frustration, analyses of the books I had read (I had begun to read Ibsen, Pirandello, and Joyce; I hated *Ulysses*) and diatribes against the people I disliked. Once, when an English master had been scathing about an essay I had written denouncing the concept of Shakespearian tragedy, I covered twenty pages of the Journal before the indignation subsided enough to sleep. I wrote the Journal with the idea of ultimate publication, as I had no doubt that every word I had ever written would one day be of interest to students. I filled ten large-sized notebooks in just over a year, and then one day destroyed them all in a fit of disgust. I also had innumerable short stories and plays rejected by publishers, and finally stopped sending them out, finding that their return depressed me more than a possible acceptance was worth. The underlying feeling of futility was still my major problem. My one-act plays were comedies, and most of the short stories owed their style to *The Pickwick Papers*, and I found myself disliking myself for writing such stuff. Occasional attempts to write like Poe made me feel worse. I wrote with a sense of obsession, hating the medium. I also knew most of T. S. Eliot's poetry by heart now, but it had no notable influence on my style.

THE worst insight came during the long Easter holiday of 1948. I had been reading far too much—out of boredom—and spent a whole day reading Janko Lavrin's little book on Russian literature. It is not very cheerful reading, with its descriptions of the stories of Chekhov, Saltykov's *Golovlyev Family*, and Goncharov's *Oblomov*. I went into the kitchen to switch on the stove to make tea, and had a black-out. It was a strange sensation. I stood there, fully conscious, clutching the stove to keep upright, and yet conscious of nothing but blackness. There was an electric-like sensation in my brain, so that I could have believed that I had been given an electric shock. It was as if something was flowing through me, and I had an insight of what lay on the other side of consciousness. It looked like an eternity of pain. When my vision cleared, I switched the kettle on and went into the other room. I could not be certain what I had seen, but I was afraid of it. It seemed as if I were the bed of a river, and the current was all pain. I thought I had seen the final truth—*that life does not lead to anything*; it is *an escape from something*, and the "something" is a horror that lies on the other side of consciousness. I could understand what Kurtz had seen in *Heart of Darkness*. All the metaphysical doubts of years seemed to gather to a point, in one realisation: What *use* is such truth? Later in the day, I went out cycling; there seemed to be a supreme irony in every manifestation of life that I saw, Eliot's lines from *The Waste Land* ran in my head:

> "*On Margate sands I can connect*
> *Nothing with nothing*
> *The broken fingernails of dirty hands. . . .*"

Later, I wrote about it in my Journal, with a sense that the futility had now come its full circle; for up till then, writing in my Journal had been the one action that did not seem futile; now I was recording my certainty of the futility of *everything*. And yet I recorded it with a compulsive sense that everything should be told.

I think I recognised how far the source of these periods of exhaustion was physical. It seemed a further reason for nihilistic unbelief. All things depended upon mere physical energy. Therefore, there was no will.

I had seen the word "nihilism" somewhere, and asked the English master at school what it meant. "Belief in nothing," he told me, and at once I thought I had found a name for my own state of mind. It was not just *lack* of belief in *anything*—it was active *belief in Nothing*. I cannot now understand the significance that that word "Nothing" carried for me then. I remember, though, how I discovered the Tao Te Ching in a compilation called *The Bible of the World*, and read:

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There is a thing inherent and natural
Which existed before heaven and earth
Motionless and fathomless
It stands alone and never changes;
It pervades everywhere and never becomes exhausted.
It may be regarded as the mother of the Universe
I do not know its name
If I am forced to give it a name
I call it Tao, and I name it Supreme.
Supreme means going on
Going on means going far,
Going far means returning.

Therefore Tao is supreme; heaven is supreme; earth is supreme; and man is also supreme. There are in the universe four things supreme, and man is one of them.

I was certain that "Tao" was my positive principle of Nothingness, the most fundamental thing in the Universe. The line "Going far means returning," I took to mean a recognition that all thought chases its own tail: *vanitas vanitatum*. As to the last section, with its "Man is supreme," my already Swiftian views on the stupidity and futility of human beings led me to decide that "Man" was a mistranslation for "I"; that, in fact, Lao Tze was merely expressing his inability to escape complete solipsism. I could not (and still do not) accept the view that Taoism is a humanism.

QUITE suddenly, my "nihilism" ceased to have things its own way. It happened unexpectedly, and cut into my normal state of bored abandonment like a revelation. It happened in this way. A day came when I seriously contemplated suicide. It was in the long, hot summer of 1947, when I was working as a laboratory assistant. The atmospheric pressure of humiliations and irritations affected me more, having no counter-pressure of conviction to meet it; only my disbelief. After some day of nervous strains, whose details I have now forgotten, I arrived home after "school," and tried to "write away" my tension in my Journal. I found writing simply an aid to reflection, a crutch for my thoughts. And after about an hour of writing, I found my resistance slowly returning. I thought clearly: This must cease immediately; *I will not go on living like this*. I was too familiar with these revivals of strength that was sucked away again the next day. Then I saw the answer: Kill myself.

It cheered me immensely. I cycled to my evening classes with a feeling of having at last learned to master my destiny. I arrived late, and listened to the professor's sarcasms without interest. It was our evening for analytical chemistry practice. A glass tray contained a mixture of powders that we had to separate. I took some in my watch-glass, sniffed it, tested it in a bunsen flame, then went into the other room to the reagent shelves. Glass bottles contained cobalt chloride, silver nitrate, potassium iodide, and various acids. In the middle there was a bottle of hydrocyanic acid. As I took it down, my mind made a leap, and I was quite clearly one minute in the future, with a burning in the throat and in the pit of the stomach. In that moment, I was suddenly supremely aware that what I wanted was not less life but more. The sensation of drinking the acid was so clear that it was almost as if I had done it. I stood there for a second with the bottle in my hand. The perception was so clear that it seemed to last for hours. Then, as someone stood beside me, I put it back, vaguely, as if I had taken it by mistake, and reached down the methyl red. In one second, I had seen something that I have striven to see all my life since.

It is impossible to detail that perception, or rather, it *could be done*, but only by a slow building up of new language values in a work of art—not in cold blood, as now. First, there was a sense of destiny; by which I mean *a sense of extension in time*. Normally we live in the present. It is for biographers to point out that there *was* an extension from moment to moment; that a direction, a purpose, a total shape can be perceived. And too few of us have the benefit of a biographer, or even deserve one. It is only the man of genius who determines that there *shall* be an extension, a purpose; and he works blindly towards it,

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never himself seeing his own life as a whole. The immediacy of things is our prison. The moments of crisis give insights; have an effect like being hurled into the air, making visible from above not only one's own wormlike geodesic, burrowing its way into the future, but something of the huge world-line of the whole race. It becomes suddenly imaginable that one might even one day, in some glimpse, see the whole purpose and direction of life itself. Nietzsche's Last Man is a short-sighted flea, stuck in the present like a fly in treacle. Each of us is the Last Man in surrendering to time. It is no wonder that, for such, the grasshopper is a burden and desire fails. Eternity is not secession from time; it is power over time. The saint is rocketed into eternity for moments, blasted by sheer drive of his own Will.

My insight that evening did not last for long. Perhaps I was too anxious that it should last. I remember the feeling of having been suddenly awakened to the possibilities of my own will-power, and the dream-like quality of the rest of the evening. And when I got home, I did not try to write about it. For the first time, I had a sense of something too real to write about. And later, I came to analyse the experience in my Journal, and recognised it as one of many such experiences; only greater in degree. I did not discover Hermann Hesse until six years later; I am certain that, if I had, *Steppenwolf* would have become the bible of my 'teens. He recognises these fluctuations of insight as being the very stuff of the artist's life. At any time in my 'teens, asked what is the goal of all life, I would have replied without hesitation: Insight. Later deliberations have made me less certain.

MY YEAR as a civil servant was the dreariest of my 'teens. In my Journal, I wrote that the chief qualification for a tax-collector is to be able to simulate work. I hated pretending to file schedule A forms that did not need filing. I envied Shaw when I read in Hesketh Pearson's Life that he had been so efficient as an office-boy that his employers had refused to accept his resignation. I was frankly incompetent and frankly outspoken about my dislike of the job. I took half a dozen books to the office every day, and read them when I had finished filing. In slack periods, I slipped out to the local library and stayed there for hours at a time. I was an appallingly bad office-boy. The head of the office was a pleasant, middle-aged Londoner; he was my major compensation for the boredom. Whenever he had nothing to do, he asked me into his office, and then "talked philosophy"—which meant that he told me long, rambling stories about his own life to illustrate his own incorrigibly optimistic viewpoint. Whenever I had to be reprimanded for some oversight or piece of incompetence—which was pretty frequently—he delegated the job to his second-in-command (a good-tempered Scot, who also took a lenient view of my inefficiency). After six months in the Inland Revenue office, I took exams for establishment in the Civil Service. I can still remember my despair when I received the letter congratulating me on having passed. I celebrated my establishment by writing a long, pessimistic story about the end of the world; I produced it in a single eight-hours' sitting one Saturday afternoon. No one ever liked the story, and I destroyed it later. It was distinctly indebted to Wells' *The Star*.

The only occurrence of importance in my year as a civil servant was my definite abandonment of Dickens as a master of style. One day, in a state of boredom and disgust, I began a story in the "stream of consciousness" style, and found that it expressed my emotions so well that from that time I experimented with it continuously.

I had always detested the idea of National Service, but my period in the RAF was like a holiday. The first eight weeks of square-bashing was so hectic that I had no time to think, and my mental faculties enjoyed the vacation. This was followed by a boring December in a Birmingham training camp, when I had little to do except learn to be a Clerk, General Duties. I had not chosen it myself—the clerking job—and I resented it. Finally, I was posted to a station near Nottingham, and given a little office all to my-

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self, and was as bored as in the tax office. One day, in a state of wild irritation, I was thoroughly rude to the adjutant, who, instead of sending for the guard, asked me sympathetically why I disliked office work so much. He hoped to get me transferred to some medical unit where I might exercise my incompetence among patients who were simulating illness to escape parades. He had been unlucky in having had a series of inefficient clerks whose oversights had brought unending complaints from GHQ, and hoped to exchange me for better or worse. Somehow, he overshot his mark, and a month later I found myself on my way home with my discharge papers. The whole story is unprintable. I left the RAF with a delighted recognition that one's salvation can lie in proceeding to extremes of indiscretion and ignoring the possible consequences.

THE sheer joy of walking out of the RAF had a cathartic effect on me. I had suddenly become a convinced disciple of rashness. I took a number of jobs in quick succession. I worked on a fairground, selling tickets for a gambling machine. I met a girl with whom I carried on an affair for the rest of the year. It was my first sexual experience, and it contributed to the tremendously optimistic state of mind that I experienced all that year. During that summer, I worked on various farms in Leicestershire, learning to milk cows —electrically and by hand—make hay, shovel cow-dung into barrows, harness and unharness horses, and dislike the English countryside intensely. Luckily, my dislike did not survive my period as a farm hand.

I had ceased to read Eliot; I even gave away all his works, alleging that he was "morbid" and "anti-life." Instead, I carried Synge around with me, and read Herrick, Rabelais, Boccaccio, Blake—and, of course, Shaw. I preferred Joyce's Buck Mulligan to Stephen Dedalus. My interest in comparative religion also developed, and I read Buddhist and Hindu texts for the first time. My first reading of the Bhagavade Gita was so important to me that I bound the copy in leather and carried it everywhere with me. The idea of entering a monastery also became increasingly attractive. Not necessarily a Christian monastery; I did not count myself a Christian in the sense of believing in redemption by Christ. I felt certain, on the contrary, that no one had to be redeemed by anyone, in that no man had ever yet recognised how great was his spiritual capacity for redeeming himself. The monastery symbolised serenity and time for meditation. Yeats' "storm-beaten old watch-tower" would have done as well. But the problem of escaping work, escaping the complications of having to find food and drink and a change of clothes, seemed to me my greatest, most acute problem. I started instruction in Catholicism, feeling that to become a Catholic would be the first step towards a monastery. But what I read of the strenuous life in monasteries discouraged me. My final disqualification, of course, was my failure to see any need for Christ. The need for God I could understand, and the need for a religion; I could even make an emotional act of sympathy with a devotee like Seuse or St. Francis, who weave fantasies around the cross, the nails, etc. But ultimately I could not accept the need for redemption by a Saviour. To pin down the fact of salvation to one place in space and time seemed a naïve kind of anthropomorphism, like portraying Lao Tze's Unchanging with a beard and white hair.

The solution seemed simpler. In my 'teens, I had been puzzled and made wretched by a feeling that sudden moods of vision and insight—Wordsworth's "glory and the freshness of a dream"—could not be retained or recalled at will. The Buddhist and Hindu scriptures prescribed simple disciplines for retaining them. It was a short step from there to deciding that most men lead such dull and second-rate lives because the concept of a spiritual and intellectual discipline is so foreign to them. It seemed to me that even the men who talk about the need for discipline never practise it. It all seemed curiously simple then. Perhaps it is. It seems more complicated now, but perhaps the fault lies in me.

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Stuart Hampshire

Uncertainty in Politics

POLITICAL philosophy is not dead, even if it is asleep in England. There are still positive assertions to be made, and ultimate differences of belief still exist. In an earlier essay in ENCOUNTER, called "In Defence of Radicalism," I tried to argue that the end of political action ought to be the continual widening of the area of choice open to each individual equally. There is a challenge from philosophers: what authority, they ask, lies behind this "ought"? Has not logical analysis shown that any moral pronouncement of this kind can be no more than an expression of a personal attitude? It would only become an objective proposition in political philosophy, and therefore be worth discussing, if it were shown to follow from some general theory of the limits of human knowledge; but now at last we know that such a demonstration is impossible. In this objection, at least one proposition of political philosophy is presupposed—namely, that any principle of political decision can be no more than an expression of a personal attitude; according to the challenger, this is the only true proposition in political philosophy. The subject ends at this point and rational inquiry is closed.

My reasons for defending the criterion of freedom in fact lie altogether outside this curt philosophical argument. If I still think that they are good reasons and that they have some general validity, I must also think that the philosophy which is refusing me the right to state them is a mistaken one. I must reject its implied theory of the limits of moral argument. There is therefore no alternative to stating these reasons and considering whether they are sufficient. This is the same as to say that there is no alternative to entering into political philosophy. Political philosophy has often changed its direction and turned to entirely new methods of argument. But it still remains recognisably the same, as long as it is an inquiry into the ultimate reasons for decision. One should never allow oneself to be intimidated by logicians. They cannot make the laws of argument; they can only codify them when they are already in force. The real change in the direction of political philosophy has come, not so much from logic, as from the study of history, and, later, from anthropology and psychology.

The change can be expressed very simply: in the last hundred years it has become increasingly difficult to believe that there is such a thing as human nature, formed, finished, and ascertainable. The great political philosophers of the past, whom we still read, all start from some more or less confident statement about human nature, its essential attributes and needs. The form of the argument has always been the same: since such and such are the essential attributes of human beings, a society will only be tolerable if it is designed to satisfy such and such overriding needs. According as different needs were distinguished as essential, different forms of society were recommended. No great political philosopher before Hegel argued in any other way. Even the most sceptical, Machiavelli and Hume, appealed to the constancies of human

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nature, and without this appeal they would have been left with very little to say.

The modern movement, in art and philosophy alike, begins after Hegel with a doubt, a growing suspicion of these constancies. Can the ground-plan of men's nature ever be known, and therefore the fitting forms of its expression prescribed? Suppose that one has been gradually convinced that there is no universally valid statement to be made about human nature, except the negative statement that it is essentially unfinished, uncertain, left open for indefinite development in many diverging directions: that the range of human needs, and their order of priority, cannot be anticipated and circumscribed, except in physical and biological terms: that we can never know in advance what men's minds and temperaments may become as a result of their continuing experiments on themselves: and that the only limit to experiment is set by the unanticipated desires and needs which appear in particular men at some particular time. Then no deduction of the proper order of society is possible: political philosophy, together with æsthetics and the theory of art, must begin again from new premisses.

THERE is nothing said here about the subjectivity of values, which must be a very old doctrine of logic (certainly older than Hume), if it has any force at all. The openness of human nature is a very general fact of the natural order, and has nothing to do with logic. It is a fact discovered by reflection upon the known history of human societies and also upon our own changing experience. We can still project ourselves into the old imaginations, shared by conservatives and radicals alike, of a few fixed patterns of motive and impulse, endlessly repeating themselves in new combinations. "*In tutte le città ed in tutti i popoli sono quegli medesimi desideri e quelli medesimi omori, e come vi furono sempre.*"* "*Tutte le cose del mondo in ogni tempo hanno il proprio riscontro con gli antichi tempi. Il che nasce perchè essendo quelle operate dagli uomini, che hanno ed ebbono sempre le medesime passioni, conviene di necessità che le sortischino il medesimo effetto.*"† Machiavelli's proposition is in no way self-contradictory. There are certainly many who still assume that it is true: conservatives, looking for the conditions of a stable society, which will be adjusted to present habits, and ignoring the fact that present habits have always been the way of transition to new needs: radical reformers, who, in the manner of the 18th century, hope to plan society for generations ahead, perfecting men by the right adjustment of a few permanent instincts: Marxists, who set a limit to the appetites which can unite men into groups for common action.

Is one not driven to accept personal freedom as the criterion of political decision if one discards this common assumption? If human nature is always indeterminate and always in the process of formation, and if we cannot know what the powers and needs of men may become, we have no cause to plan for a perfect future, or to try to arrest men's development at any particular stage. Rather there is a reason to leave the more remote future open for men's further experiments upon themselves, and immediately to resist only those policies which close the future to further free and divergent choices. When present frustrations are removed, changed men will see new possibilities and therefore feel new frustrations. There is no stopping-place. In this uncertainty there can be no justification for inhibiting any living desire or preference which does not inhibit others, unless one claims some supernatural authority.

THESE are the negative arguments for freedom, found in the facts of human variety and development. There are also positive arguments, more indefinite and less easily stated, which are found in experience of that

* "In all cities and in all peoples there are the same desires and the same passions as there always were."

† "Everything that happens in the world at any time has a genuine resemblance to what happened in ancient times. This is because the agents who bring such things about are men, and men have, and always have had, the same passions, from which it necessarily comes about that the same effects are produced."

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which men value and respect. We value and respect anything which extends our preconceived idea of possible human achievement. The crowds which visit ruins, and which are ready to admire anything sufficiently old, may seem ridiculous to æsthetic purists; but the sentiment—"This also was made by men, who were very different from us and yet alike"—now, in the age of the museum, enters into any full enjoyment of art. There is a sense of continuity, of solidarity almost, which is most strongly felt across great distances of time or across great varieties in style of expression; men are moved and encouraged by the range and variety of the history in which they can feel that they participate, by the age of the monuments in their cities. From room to room of the museum they find the work of distinct personalities who each diverged from an inherited tradition, and the value of the achievement, taken as a whole, is felt to lie in its variety, the value of each separate work in its originality. This is the almost unavoidable attitude of modern criticism, modern because historical; and it has its influence on artists themselves, who, seeing their own development historically, may feel the necessity of perpetually forcing some innovation in style.

We now naturally feel that the repetition of any human achievement, or of any type of human excellence, is of less value than the doing of something excellent for the first time. If we find a formula for reproducing a type of beauty or excellence at will, the beauty and excellence loses its force, disappears, and is no longer felt. Whatever man-made thing is supremely valuable is also unexpected. This goes back to the distinction that we make between human beings and any other natural objects; we attribute an extra dimension to men's minds, a dimension of unrestricted possibility. It is easy to confuse this assumption with the superstition that men's behaviour cannot be studied scientifically, or that it is not subject to natural laws. There need be no such implication. The implication is only that the human species is not definable by any unchanging characteristics other than a certain physical structure and the power of deliberate choice and experiment. The direction of future experiment may be in theory predictable; but no one in fact could ever have enough knowledge of future conditions to make a prediction far into the future; for he cannot anticipate the type of man who will then be making the experiments. As new types of men appear as a result of multiple experiments, we always find that we can never catch up, or understand why it has happened, except sometimes in historical retrospect. Even the development of a single person, of his powers and needs, generally seems to himself mysterious, as if he could not have known what his own temperament would become until it was too late. By his own self-conscious thought and action he is always changing the initial conditions on which he might have based a prediction.

The uncertainty goes further and lies in the nature of action itself. Whenever I am free to act as I choose, I must necessarily be uncertain of the future until I have decided what to do; to decide is simply to become certain what I will do, or at least try to do. A cone of uncertainty must always extend in front of me into the future if I am a free and reflective agent at all. The sign of evil is a future which is already known with certainty to those who will pass through it, and known not as an effect of their decision; this is the condition of a prisoner, the withdrawal of human life. Even the future course of action which is foreseen by me, because I myself have decided upon it, cannot stretch before me into the remote future, fixed and certain in all its details, without a sense that I have closed myself to experience. Decisions are guided by experience, and are changed by its pressures, and I cannot be sure, even in retrospect, how much of the patterns that are now visible in my actions were originally assignable to character and how much to circumstance. How pointless my actions would seem to me if, at the moment of action, I thought that they always flowed directly from my fixed and finished nature; in a sense, there would be nothing left for me to do. Since I may at any time reflect on my own present nature and dispositions, and be aware of the

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influences bearing on me, the flow of action from character need never be direct.

Any representation of human lives in fiction that is too tidy, too direct in the flow of action from character already stated, is liable to seem false and degrading. This was the failure of the *roman psychologique*, the knowingness of the author who keeps his characters trimmed, without that margin of uncertainty which surrounds any fully human behaviour. The style has now descended into the detective story, into the vulgar confidence of writers like Simenon who, through his investigator Maigret, diagnoses his unmoving specimens, like a naturalist with his insects. In any serious fiction, in Tolstoy and Conrad, every character carries a shadow of uncertainty, of doubtful possibilities, with him. There is therefore an unfolding story, and not the exhibition of a closed case in natural history. This is achieved, in many different ways, by those devices which lead the reader towards the standpoint of the protagonists, with the uncertainties of their future action and fate before them.

IF UNCERTAINTY of nature is part of our notion of a person, *a fortiori* it is part of our notion of man as a species. There is no need to think of progress, following Condorcet and his contemporaries, as the production of some ideal type of man, to be further multiplied like desirable natural objects. A socialist may think of progress only as the continuous extension of the area of opportunity for decision and experiment to new races and classes. The demand for greater equality is only the demand that there should be less waste of human possibilities. Since we know nothing of the end of human development, unless supernatural knowledge is claimed, we have no right to exclude anyone from the opportunity of a share in the process.

So much is contingent that moralists have assumed to be necessary. How much in human nature, in ordinary needs and purposes, would be changed if the causes of senescence were discovered and controlled and men were no longer in the same sense mortals? Nothing in secular morality can be permanent, except respect for the undestructive needs and ambitions of particular living people, and the necessity of leaving to their descendants a future which is more open and unfenced than the present.

These are arguments only. There is no proof of this, or of any other, proposition in political philosophy.

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Andrew Shonfield

The Pursuit of Prestige

A Guide to post-war British policy

FOR ten years now British statesmen have been treating a series of economic crises as if they were acts of God. This has been broadly the attitude of the public, too. It is only recently that people have seriously begun to wonder whether there is not some deep underlying failure which is responsible for this succession of economic troubles. Not that there has been a lack of economic self-criticism in Britain at any time during the post-war period; but the tendency has been to offset it by a kind of political self-adulation. If one asked why nation A appeared to be richer than Britain or why nation B was more productive, the standard answer in the late forties and the early fifties was a brief survey of Britain's special circumstances. Other nations had not, first, won an extremely costly war and then proceeded at once to conduct the most orderly social revolution of all time. If they appeared to be more successful, it was either because they did not have to carry the economic burden of military victory or because they had no social revolution to consolidate and defend.

Now this kind of argument will no longer wash. Britain's economic failure cannot be treated as a sort of optical illusion, caused by a confusion of moral standards, or alternatively, as a temporary trouble due to special circumstances. It has gone on too long and been far too consistent for that. The explanations current nowadays look to more fundamental and constant causes. The one that is most fashionable at the moment is that Britain is an undynamic society. This has the advantage as an explanation of being good and sweeping; no monist could want more to cover the post-war decade in Britain. Moreover, in some sense, the explanation is obviously true—in the sense that people do not compete very hard with one another in this country and are not dreadfully ambitious. But in another sense the nation, or rather its leaders, are plainly very ambitious. They are determined to go on playing a great rôle in international affairs, and are ready to put the country under considerable strain in order to do so. I shall try to show that our economic troubles owe a great deal to this continuing political dynamic, and that excessive national ambition is our undoing, not any lack of it.

THE failure of economic policy since the war appears in two ways. In its external relations, Britain is still dogged by an unsolved balance of payments problem, and has not been able to re-establish sterling as the strong international currency. Internally, on the other hand, the economy has been so constricted that Britain has not managed until recently to achieve anything like an adequate level of industrial investment. ("Adequate" means the rate of investment which will en-

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sure that Britain's rate of economic growth does not fall behind that of its main competitors in international trade.) If we had at least acted like Australia or Norway and run a large investment programme at the expense of a deficit in our international payments, there would be some consolation. Or there is the Belgian alternative—a restriction of home investment designed to strengthen the balance of payments, which produces a currency that is really able to look the dollar in the face. Britain, it seems, has somehow managed to avoid both having her cake and eating it.

Yet there is no obvious reason why Britain should be marked out by poverty in this way. On the contrary, the national income per head of population has been for a long time amongst the highest in Europe. Moreover Britain has received since the war a special American loan of $4,000 million and the largest share of United States aid provided under the Marshall Plan. The truth is that too little of this money stuck to British fingers; American aid was "passed on," particularly to the sterling area, in the sense that while American money was being pumped in at one end, Britain was pumping out money in the form of grants and loans and investment abroad. Here, in fact, is the first clue to Britain's post-war economic failure. It is not that the nation has refused to work or has consumed too much or that the State has expended the national treasure in social welfare schemes. It is that the British government has continued to act the part of a great power in international affairs, regardless of the fact that the resources at its disposal are not adequate for the task.

THERE are, it is true, several of these expensive decisions of the early post-war period that I, personally, would not wish to have been taken otherwise. British generosity in Germany and in Asia at that time was right, even if it meant that the British economy was weakened in the process. The real complaint is that at no stage was the choice put like this. It was simply assumed that Britain's rôle in international affairs required that certain expenditures should be a first charge on the nation's resources. Nobody stopped to consider what other important objectives of national policy might have to be sacrificed to support this extra charge. That was largely because the policy-makers were sure that somehow or other the nation "would be able to afford it." There was a curious unrealism in their attitude towards this economic question.

In economic affairs policy appears to have been too often guided by considerations of prestige. Take the whole question of overseas investment. Both parties are in agreement that it is a good thing, that there ought to be more of it. By Labour, it is presented as a straightforward philanthropic issue—helping the poor people of Asia and Africa to a richer life, with the aid of a comparatively minor measure of self-denial on the part of the British community. It is a kind of flag-day approach—only 1 per cent of the national income, lady; you'll hardly notice it. The Conservatives add to this a sly suggestion, which is not spurned by Labour either, that many of these overseas investments are, besides, highly profitable, and that to make them will help to recover Britain's past financial pre-eminence in the world. Neither side really faces the problem of choice. On the one hand, it is assumed that what is necessary can be done by a small and manageable degree of consumer restraint, whereas the truth is that in a society without rationing consumers are extremely difficult to restrain, unless all sorts of other unpleasant constraints on credit and confidence and production are also set in train. In fact, the standard government reaction to the need to economise in post-war Britain has been the investment cut: that is much more manageable.

The second point that is generally overlooked is that self-denial by British consumers is no answer to the problem of building a steel plant for the Indians, for instance. It is popularly assumed that economists dispose of some sort of alchemy which will rapidly turn strawberries and cream forgone in England into steel rolling equipment in India. This is the fallacy of undifferentiated resources,

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which lies at the root of much of the crooked thinking on the subject of economic pressures. These pressures take a long time to work through: it might be years before growing unemployment in the strawberry business resulted in any transfer of labour or other resources to the capital goods industries. In the meanwhile, the 1-million-ton steel plant which the Indians want, and which they have now been promised by Britain, competes directly for the scarce resources required for the expansion of the British steel industry. This is short of just such a large integrated plant as is to be built for the Indians; the same materials, the same skills, even in all probability the same individual firms will be required for the new British plant—incidentally long overdue.

THE issue here presents itself unmistakably as a choice between investment at home and investment abroad. In one way or another the British domestic project must be hampered by the overload, voluntarily assumed, of the Indian job. Foreign investment can only be painless for a country with surplus capacity in its capital goods industries or for one which has such a large surplus of foreign exchange that it can afford to pay others to carry out the tasks that would overburden its own industry. At no time since the war has Britain had either of these advantages. Indeed, the state of the British economy at home throughout this period, as shown by the low level of domestic investment, would have suggested the need for a policy of large-scale capital import—not capital export.

Only one or two other countries in Europe have spent so small a proportion of their national income as Britain on enlarging the national stock of equipment, buildings, and other capital assets since the war. Until 1954 a smaller proportion of output per head of population was being devoted to investment here even than before the war. In every other European country for which records are available the proportion rose after the war. And as soon as the British industrialist began in 1954/5 to increase his investment in new plant and equipment to a level which would allow him to keep pace with his competitors abroad, there was a balance of payments crisis.

In the light of these circumstances, Britain's pretensions to be a capital-exporting country look like delusions of grandeur. In fact the international investment, which in recent years has been running at an annual rate of £150 million to £200 million, has only been possible because Britain has been indulging in the banker's sport of borrowing short and lending long. It is an extraordinary hazardous business for a banker with resources as limited as those of the United Kingdom. The difficulty of any attempt to reverse this process—to stop playing the banker and to get on with the serious business of British industrial investment at home—is that these overseas commitments are by now embodied in fundamental national policies. One of the conditions for the survival of the sterling area under British management is that Britain continues to permit the free movement of capital to any sterling area country. Under present arrangements, there is no means of inducing a British owner of capital to keep his money at home, except by offering him a higher return on it than he can get elsewhere in the sterling area. This has been one of the ends served by the increases in the British bank rate in the past two years. They have also had the equally important aim of fobbing off the would-be borrowers from the overseas sterling area: seeing that they had to pay so much more for their loans, they have postponed coming to the London capital market, and so have provided welcome relief to the United Kingdom balance of payments. This looks like the apotheosis of the policy of prestige. In order to keep up appearances for the mother of capital markets, the grand provider of the sterling area, interest rates are raised—at serious inconvenience to Britain itself, which has, in consequence, to pay out more money on its own vast debts to foreign countries—in order to persuade the sterling area countries voluntarily to reduce their demands on London.

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Now I do not intend to suggest that the sterling area does not serve a useful purpose for its members, and indeed for the world at large. No doubt, if the sterling area did not exist, somebody would have to invent it—only it would be extremely unlikely to be as well managed as it is today. Presumably this is one of the compelling reasons for the interest of British civil servants and bankers in it, and for the extraordinary contortions of policy that are necessary in order to make Britain appear, most improbably, as the natural provider of capital for a large number of rapidly developing countries, each tending to live beyond its own means. But it is also true that the sterling area remains the most important vestige of the old kind of authority exercised from London over the British Commonwealth. There is no doubt that it confers considerable prestige on Britain in such councils as the European Payments Union and the International Monetary Fund to be acknowledged, not just as another nation around the table, but as the head of a great monetary area. But is not this respect being purchased at an excessive price? The usual answer is that Britain has a direct commercial interest in the widest possible international use of sterling, because this increases the foreign exchange earnings from merchanting activities connected with the City of London. There is a complete lack of any statistics on the size of these earnings. It is remarkable that no serious effort has ever been made to measure them, in spite of the fact that so much of British policy in recent years—the reopening of international commodity markets and the approach to currency convertibility—has been implicitly based on the view that the London merchants and bankers could, given the necessary assistance from the Government, make a decisive difference to the balance of payments. This is highly doubtful. Certainly the many commodity markets that have now been operating for some time have not added noticeably to the country's foreign exchange earnings.

It is, I think, significant that none of the foreign countries which have since the war had the opportunity of taking over from sterling the advantages of running an international medium of exchange, with all the profits attached, have shown any desire to do so. The risks of being so exposed to every small fluctuation in international confidence in your currency are, they feel, an overwhelming deterrent. A German banker of considerable shrewdness and experience, with whom I discussed this matter recently, told me that after studying the question he and his colleagues had come to the conclusion that, apart from insurance, there was very little money in it, compared with the ordinary business of exporting.

"Why is Britain so interested in it, in that case?" I asked, perhaps a little truculently.

"Oh," he said, "there is such a thing as historic missions, and the British, thank God, regard it as their mission to provide the world with an international medium of exchange. It is like the French in North Africa," he went on. "The military costs of staying there are by now much greater than any possible economic gain. But they, like the English, will stick to their mission."

He looked at me with the mild surprise of a don discovering that his interlocutor really believes that economic activities are always, or even usually, pursued for economic motives.

In fact, the great aim of currency convertibility in the form envisaged by the British Government in recent years, turns out to have been another prestige objective. For the aim was, after all, not to give any advantage to Englishmen, by letting them have the freedom to spend their pounds on dollar goods. It was only foreigners — "non-residents" in the parlance of the Treasury—who were to be given the absolute right to convert their sterling into dollars. The satisfaction to be derived by the ordinary (resident) Englishman from the grand confrontation, when the pound was at last going to be able to look the dollar in the face, was going to be exclusively spiritual. It is remarkable evidence of the extent to which the national prestige attitude had got under people's skins that no one even commented that it seemed odd to grant a privilege of this

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kind to non-residents, while denying it to British holders of sterling.

It is not always easy, of course, to distinguish between the pursuit of prestige and acting with a high sense of international responsibility. The great ball and chain which was voluntarily riveted on to the British economy in the early 1950's, with the rearmament programme, undoubtedly falls into the latter category. In the circumstances of 1950/1 it was right to rearm, even at considerable cost to the country's economic welfare. But that is not to say that many of the other military decisions of recent years, which have weighed on the economy, have been governed exclusively by the same kind of international obligations, or at any rate that these obligations could not have been discharged in a way that caused less economic strain to Britain. Was it really necessary to go ahead independently, alone among the lesser powers, and spend our resources on the manufacture of a hydrogen bomb, which we know we will never use independently? Again, was there not some less expensive way out, after the original withdrawal from Suez, than to create another exclusively British Middle East base in Cyprus? Whatever the political and military preferences of British officials, the huge financial cost of this project, falling entirely on the British Exchequer, might have suggested the alternative of a joint NATO base in some place like Turkey. It might have been awkward, but there is no evidence that the possibility was even seriously considered, or that it would have been more awkward than the Cyprus alternative turns out to be. And the reason why it was not considered is that in a matter like this, where national prestige is involved, the economic consequences of a particular act of policy are the last thing to be weighed.

If unmistakable proof of this were required, it would hardly be possible to fabricate better evidence than is provided by the recent fiasco over the payment of the foreign exchange costs of the British forces in Germany. The Germans have said that they will make no further contribution to these costs after 1957; and so Britain is left high and dry with a commitment to maintain four divisions and an air force in Germany up to the end of the present century, at an annual cost in German currency that cannot be much less than £50 million. That means that £1 million of additional exports per week will now have to be sold to meet the bill. How did we get manœuvred into this position? The answer is that we manœuvred ourselves into it. When in the summer of 1954, after the collapse of the European Defence Community, Sir Anthony Eden, who was Foreign Secretary at the time, did his remarkable act of international salvage, saving the Western Alliance and both Germany's and France's place in it with the promise of four British divisions for the following fifty years, everybody was properly grateful. This was surely the moment for a country with a chronic balance of payments problem to raise the matter of sharing the financial burden. Whatever the British taxpayer might be prepared to do to keep his soldiers abroad in food, clothing, and arms, it was plainly just that others should, in this case, contribute towards the foreign exchange cost of the new commitment. It is hard to believe that there would at the time have been any serious dispute about it. But no one on the British side even bothered to ask. British leaders were, in fact, acting in the style that they were accustomed to; and a very attractive style it is, too. But it does seem a little incautious to be quite such a jolly good fellow and insist constantly on paying for drinks all round. It is no wonder that people are not very sympathetic when you come along afterwards and say that you took it for granted that they would fork out their share.

Military expenditure abroad on British troops and bases, together with subsidies and grants for allies like Jordan and Libya, cost some £180 million of foreign exchange a year. Add to this the outright grants of some £30 million to the colonies—separate from loans and investments—and the total bill comes to £210 million. This is a bill for a first-class power, quite large enough to cripple a second-class power. Make a further addi-

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tion of £160 million for the average annual cost of British foreign investment in recent years—1955 was unusually low because of the credit squeeze—and the final figure, which provides some measure of British political and prestige expenses abroad, comes to over £350 million a year. This is more than 10 per cent of the country's total export earnings. It gives the size of the special handicap with which this country has saddled itself in the struggle against competitors like Germany.

It would be wrong to think of this handicap as falling exclusively on the balance of payments. Germany's favourable international balance gives her scope, above all, to devote a much higher proportion of the national product to investment than this country. In Britain, as we have seen most recently in 1955, even a quite moderate lift in manufacturing investment can run this country straight into a balance of payments crisis. And the result of this discrepancy between German and British rates of investment is that German output is growing much faster than ours: by the early 1960's, at the present rate of growth, the German national product per head of population will be larger than the British.*

THE prestige motive has entered deeply into the whole British approach to economic questions. There is a striking disproportion between the pitifully small amounts that have been devoted to increasing Britain's total stock of capital equipment—6 per cent of the national product, against 15 per cent in Germany—and the large resources devoted to investment in two particular fields: aircraft and atomic energy. In both of course the initial impetus has been military, and the commercial venture benefits from the economics of the by-product. Pioneering in these fields, where research is bound to make a number of false starts, is extremely expensive; and it is pretty much of a gamble whether the investment pays off in the end. It might be more economical in some instances to manufacture under licence, after somebody else has done the fundamental research. The point is not that such gambling is necessarily wrong; but that one ought perhaps not to gamble, until one has set aside enough money to pay for the upkeep of roads and for maintaining the basic national equipment in good condition. What is suspicious is that in both fields there is a quite unusual volume of nationalist ballyhoo. It is as if those concerned were less interested to sell something than to prove something: and what they seem mainly to be trying to prove is another variation of the proposition that a pound can look a dollar in the face.

The danger behind such a national attitude, which I have sought to illustrate rather than analyse in this article, is suggested very clearly by the fate of France between the wars. France, too, overloaded herself with commitments that could only be adequately met by a first-class power. Is it too far-fetched to think of the sterling area as being to Britain what the Little Entente was to France? France since the war has continued to pursue policies of prestige at considerable cost. It is not a coincidence that the only French politician who has made a serious attempt to lighten this load is Mendès-France—an economist in politics, obsessed with the problem of achieving a much more rapid growth of French productive capacity. Britain and France today seem to share the disability of medium-sized states, just rich enough to be able, by making sacrifices, to maintain the remnants of an imperial tradition. The very little states, as well as the very big ones, appear to be able to manage their affairs more successfully. It is the ones in the middle who are the natural victims of prestige policies in the present age. It is characteristic that the most successful of these nations in the middle group, Germany, has been disarmed and forcibly prevented from pursuing a policy of prestige. This is obviously not the whole explanation of German economic success since the war, but it has certainly been a factor in

* At the moment, the German gross national product per head, calculated at current rates of exchange, is rather more than four-fifths of the British. It will probably rise to nine-tenths by the end of this year.

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it. It will be interesting to see whether the re-establishment of full German sovereignty, backed by a national army, will make German policies conform more closely to the pattern of the other medium-grade states with a past to live down.

There are of course great differences between the behaviour of Britain and France during the period of imperial decline. To the comparison between French policies between the wars and British policies now, it may be objected that France consistently sought power, whereas Britain after the war has sought something quite else. What? Influence is probably the answer. The rôle envisaged for this country by contemporary statesmen both of the Right and of the Left approximates to that of a kind of international *éminence grise*, persuading, counselling, convincing both of the great powers that you are a force to be reckoned with, and then mediating between them. It has certainly been on several occasions a valuable international rôle —though it may be largely superseded in the future, once the Americans and the Russians begin to negotiate directly with one another. But in time poverty is bound to tell—even against the volume of moral pressure that a nation can exert.

Moreover, the behaviour of the British Government over the Suez crisis, right from the start at the end of July until the actual invasion of the Suez Canal zone at the beginning of November, plainly represents a sharp departure from the post-war policies described here. It may be regarded as a shift towards the French type of policy—a deliberate pursuit of power and military prestige through the use of force, or alternatively, through the threat of irresponsible behaviour. It is possible that Britain's pretensions to occupy a mediatory rôle between the two great powers have been finally shattered in one blow. Even if this does not happen, the policy of prestige through economic sacrifice and moral leadership, which I have tried to describe, seems likely to be called increasingly in question. This is because Suez and its aftermaths will strip away several layers of a popular illusion about Britain's standing, material and moral, in international affairs. My own guess is that this will lead many people to ask for the first time: Are these sacrifices necessary or worthwhile to us? The general effect may not be very nice; people may well tend to become mean in their ordinary political sentiments, where before they were generous. However, such changes in attitude are probably the unavoidable concomitants of waking up from the dream of national prestige. It is good to wake up, anyhow.

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Mishima Yukio

Hanjo

PERSONS
HANAKO, a mad girl
JITSUKO, a spinster
YOSHIO, a young man

Jitsuko's atelier. *Autumn. From afternoon until evening. The room is in disorder with evident preparations for a journey. Jitsuko, seated in an easy-chair, reads a newspaper. She puts down the newspaper, stands up impatiently, only to sit again and read.*

Scene One. (Jitsuko)

Jitsuko (to herself): It's come to nothing, to nothing, all that I've been through. I could tear this newspaper into shreds. . . . But tearing it up would do no good. No, the best thing for me would be to read it aloud the way people do, with animation and interest, as if it happened to someone else. I should read in a manner befitting the esteemed daughter of a father who believes that his is the only household unvisited by human unhappiness and a mother who is convinced that her husband is the only man in the world, as a devoted daughter might read to her parents by way of entertainment after dinner. (*As if there are others present.*) Generous father, the richest man in town, mother dear, your esteemed daughter, whom you still send money for her painting lessons and who is unmarried at forty, will now read you an interesting article. (*She reads.*) "Tragic love of mad girl. Old-fashioned romance at station of Inogashira Line. . . . A beautiful mad girl may be seen every day, rain or shine, sitting on a bench in the waiting-room of a certain station with a fan in her arms. She peers into the face of every man who alights at the station, only to return each time disappointed to her bench. In reply to a reporter's questions she said that this was Hanjo's fan. A man she met at a certain place exchanged fans with her as a pledge that they should meet again. The mad girl

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: *Hanjo* is an attempt, one of several, by the author Mishima Yukio (born 1925) to write a new play in a form similar to that of the Nō dramas of the 15th century. He has borrowed both the title and some of the incidents of the drama written by Seami Motokiyo (1363–1443), but very freely, as an outline of Seami's work will show. In it, a Captain Yoshida meets at a country inn a young courtesan named Hanako and falls in love with her. When they part they exchange fans in token of their love. Hanako, who refuses to have anything to do with other men, is driven from the inn by the mistress and goes mad. Later, when Yoshida returns for her she has already gone. He goes to Kyoto where he meets her by chance at a shrine. She regains her sanity and the play, most remarkably for a Nō drama, ends in the bliss of the reunited lovers.

Hanjo itself is the name of a Chinese court lady of ancient times whose fan is celebrated in poetry.—DONALD KEENE.

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holds a man's fan with a snow-scene painted on it. The faithless man has her fan with a moon-flower design. The man has never returned, and the girl has gone mad with longing. Her name is Hanako, and, according to a station attendant, she lives at the house of the lady artist Miss Honda Jitsuko, at number 35 of X Street."

Living at the house of Miss Honda Jitsuko, did it say? All I've gone through up to now has been so much foam on the water. It was useless for me never to have submitted to an exhibition any of the pictures I painted of Hanako, preferring people not to see them. If I had submitted the pictures as I painted them, they might have been selected or even won prizes, but ever since I've known Hanako I've only sent the other pictures, the ones I didn't put myself into, and every time they have been rejected. And it has been for nothing. After all I have been through I thought that Hanako would never leave my hands. And in spite of that—(*frantically cutting with scissors the newspaper into tiny snowflake-like fragments*). I suppose that it was fated to happen sooner or later. I could not tie Hanako. If I had tied her, her life would undoubtedly have long since faded away, like a cricket one buys from an insect-seller, and puts in a cage to give one pleasure for four or five days. I had no choice but to do what I did.

Sooner or later people are bound now to start talking about the beautiful mad girl with the fan, and next it will come to the ears of Yoshio, that faithless man. (*She rises wildly.*) The only thing is to go on a trip somewhere. The only thing to do is to run away without a moment's delay, for as long as possible, just the two of us, and hide until the sensation dies down. If he were utterly devoid of any feeling for her there would not be so much to be afraid of, but vanity may call him back, for all I know. We'll leave tonight. Nothing else can be done. Just the two of us, for some far-away place. . . . Then, if we are overtaken (*she laughs*) it won't matter much if I die. Yes, that will be quite all right. (*She begins again to make preparations for the journey.*)

Scene Two. (Hanako, Jitsuko)

Jitsuko (*pretending to be calm*): Oh, you're back already.

Hanako (*enters. Extremely beautiful but heavily made up, and overdressed in a somewhat soiled costume. She holds against her breast, opened, a large fan with a snow-scene painted on it*): It will be all right, won't it, if I leave the door open? So that if Yoshio comes he can go right in.

Jitsuko: Yes, leave it open. For now—but winter is coming on.

Hanako: It's autumn, isn't it. An autumn fan, an autumn fan, a fan for autumn. (*She weeps.*)

Jitsuko (*putting her arms about Hanako's shoulders*): There's no need to cry. Yoshio will surely come for you one day.

Hanako: Today I waited again at the station, all day long, all day long. I think that I've come to life through waiting for him. I looked at the faces of the people getting off the train. None of them was like his. They were all faces of other people. I don't think anyone has a living face except Yoshio. The faces of all the other men in the world are dead. They are all skeletons. Many many people with skulls instead of heads and briefcases in their hands got off at the station. I was so tired. Jitsuko, I waited all day today, too.

Jitsuko: I have never once waited for anything.

Hanako: It doesn't matter with you. There's no need for you to wait. But some people must wait. *My* body is filled with waiting. The evening dusk always comes to the moon-flower and the morning to the morning-glory, but I wait, I pine, yes, my body is filled with prickling pine-needles. Don't they say that human beings go on living by waiting and making other people wait? If you gave your whole life to waiting, how would it be? (She points to her body.) Is this my body? Am I an unshut window? An unshut door? (*She points to the door.*) Like that door. . . . Can I go on

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living without sleeping? Am I a doll that does not sleep?

Jitsuko: You are beautiful. I can't believe that there is anyone in the world more beautiful than you. Everybody opens many windows too widely, thinking to improve the ventilation, only to lose everything as a result. But you have only one window, and through that window everything in the world enters you. You are the richest person in the world.

Hanako (*not listening*): Today, too, I sat all day on a wooden bench. How hard that bench is. I had intended waiting for him on soft grass. When he came I would jump up and he would brush my dress for me. "Oh, see how your dress is stained by the grass."

Jitsuko: I love to see you naked. I have never seen nakedness as pure and rich as yours. Your breasts, your belly, your thighs. . . . It was worth waiting.

Hanako: What do you say?

Jitsuko: Because you waited you possess all the beautiful things in the world. A woman somewhere one morning lost her breasts, and then they were shining on your body, like medals of flesh, wonderfully fragrant. What men have fought to win, you have won by waiting.

Hanako (*not listening*): Spring, summer, autumn. . . . Which comes first, summer or autumn? If the fan were here now and alive, wouldn't summer come? (*Playing with the fan, opening and shutting it.*) How happy I'd be if the snowflakes in this design would suddenly melt away! (*She shuts the fan.*)

Jitsuko: Hanako, let's go on a trip.

Hanako (*shielding her face with an exaggerated gesture*): Why? Why?

Jitsuko: We'll go look for Yoshio. Why don't we leave as soon as possible, tonight even? You'll never find him by waiting that way. Let's go all through Japan looking for him. From village to village, from town to town, travelling the two of us—how enjoyable it will be. Soon it will be the season of coloured leaves. The mountains will all turn crimson. I want to see how healthy you look when the autumn tints are reflected on the paleness of your face. If we go, I'll help you with all my heart to search for him. On the train I'll ask every young man if he is Yoshio.

Hanako: No . . . no. . . .

Jitsuko: Why don't you want to go?

Hanako: Isn't it like running away from something?

Jitsuko (*starting*): Running away?

Hanako: It's because you don't wait, because you're a person who never waits. People who don't wait run away. I shall wait here. I won't listen to another word you say. Don't be angry, will you? If only I had stayed in that town and not gone away, he might have come again. But you dragged me here. . . . (*She notices the scraps of newspaper on the floor.*) What's this?

Jitsuko (*paling*): It isn't anything.

Hanako: It's snow! I'm sure it's snow. Dirty snow. . . . (*For a few minutes she scoops up the paper, then scatters it around her.*) See! The snow has fallen. (*With the cunning of the insane.*) The snow has fallen, it's winter already. We don't have to go on any trip. Just pretend that we've been travelling since autumn, and now that winter's come we've returned.

Jitsuko: No, it's no use. Hanako, we must go away.

Hanako: No, no.

Jitsuko: Do you understand? (*She pushes Hanako into a chair, and leaning over her she speaks in a persuasive tone.*) You have waited long enough. You have waited enough and become so beautiful that if he should meet you he would never be able to leave you again. Do you understand? You must stop waiting and go to look for him.

Hanako: No, I will not move from here. I will not move for the rest of my life. The world is so big that no matter how much I search for him it won't do any good. I will wait here and not stir. As long as I stay still, he in his wanderings will surely come to me. The motionless star and the moving star meet.

Jitsuko: What if he is also waiting and not moving?

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Hanako: You don't know men.

Jitsuko: Hanako, please don't be unreasonable. I beg of you.

Hanako: Oh, I am tired. You don't have any consideration for how tired I am, do you, Jitsuko? Every day I must sit on a hard wooden bench waiting for him. Day after day. I am tired. I don't look it perhaps. I suppose that I look like a bright, large, glossy rose. But I am really very tired. I'll rest for a while. It will do me good to lay my head a little on the pillow and sleep for an hour or two. Then I shall look like a little island fast asleep. Like a little island sunken in sleep while it waits, day after day, its harbour turned to the broad sea, wondering if one of the sailboats off the shore, transparent in the scarlet of the setting sun, will not head to port. Even in the day the moon appears, and even at night the sun shines. On that island there is no need for clocks. Today I shall throw away my clock.

Jitsuko (*sadly*): Why?

Hanako: Then the train will never leave.

(*Exit Hanako. Jitsuko stands still for a moment. She looks at the scraps of paper and begins to sweep them together towards the door with a broom. She is about to throw them away when she notices a man standing in the door.*)

Scene Three. (Yoshio, Jitsuko)

Jitsuko: Who is it?

Yoshio: Is Hanako here?

Jitsuko (*drawing herself up*): There's nobody here by that name.

Yoshio: I'm sure that she's here. (*He produces a newspaper from his pocket.*) I read about her in this morning's newspaper.

Jitsuko: The newspaper must be going in for misinformation, as usual.

Yoshio (*stepping farther in*): Please let me see Hanako.

Jitsuko (*already realising, but asking anyway*): Who *are* you?

Yoshio: If you say that Yoshio is here, she'll know who I am.

Jitsuko: That name has been familiar to me for a long time. A hateful name with a disagreeable ring to it.

Yoshio remains silent.

Jitsuko: In the first place I have no way of knowing whether or not you are the real Yoshio.

Yoshio: If you have any doubts, look at this. It's her fan, with moon-flowers painted on it.

Jitsuko: I wonder where you could have picked it up.

Yoshio: I thought that you would say something like that. Now, if you would be so kind as to take me to her. . . .

Jitsuko: When you saw the newspaper article you suddenly fancied yourself the hero of a love story and came rushing here—wasn't that it? To a woman you had abandoned for three years.

Yoshio: I managed things extremely badly, I know. But about a year ago I at last became free, and I went to that town. She was no longer there. People said that after she had gone out of her mind and couldn't appear any more as a geisha, her contract was bought out by a lady artist, who took her off to Tokyo. That was all I could find out. The artist was you, wasn't it?

Jitsuko: Yes, it was I, a spinster painter on the verge of forty. I went to that town about a year and a half ago on a sketching trip. The geishas were talking about her at a restaurant to which I was invited. One summer, they said, she and a young customer from Tokyo met. The man promised to come again, and exchanged fans with her by way of a pledge. Every day she would look at the fan and think of him, and her days were spent waiting for his return. She stopped performing for customers, and was so tormented by the madame that the poor thing finally lost her mind. When I heard this story I begged for a meeting with her. She sat in a room like a dark prison, her eyes cast down, clutching a fan in her white small hands, apparently unaware even when I entered. When I spoke she at last lifted her face. The beauty of that innocent face, like the moon with a ring round it. I fell in love at

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the first look. I bought out Hanako's contract and returned with her to Tokyo. At the time I made a vow to myself never to let her be robbed from me by that faithless man.

Yoshio: Since then, for the past year and a half, she has been in your care, I take it.

Jitsuko: I'll thank you not to adopt that manner of speech, exactly as if you had left one of your belongings in my keeping.

Yoshio: Then you won't let me see her. . . . In other words, her happiness is not what you desire.

Jitsuko: What I desire is the same as what she desires. She has no desire whatever for happiness.

Yoshio (*with a defiant smile*): Then, just supposing I came here in order to make her unhappy again. . . .

Jitsuko: Her unhappiness is beautiful and perfect. No one can meddle in her unhappiness.

Yoshio: Then there is no need to be so afraid of letting me see her.

Jitsuko: Afraid? Yes, I value my good fortune.

Yoshio: At last you've come out with the truth.

Jitsuko: You have no understanding of what my good fortune is. I am a woman who has never been loved by anyone, even when I was a child. I never have waited for anything. To this day I have always been alone. And that is not the worst. If by a remote chance someone were to love me, I have come to think that I would probably hate him in return. I can't allow any man to love me. . . . That was why I began my life of dreaming—dreaming of making a captive of someone who was very deeply in love, but not with myself. What do you think of that? Someone who would live, most beautifully, in place of me, my helpless love. As long as that person's love is unrequited, the heart is mine.

Yoshio: Is that what your good luck involves?

Jitsuko: Yes.

Yoshio: People who aren't loved think up horrible things, don't they?

Jitsuko: All love is horrible, for there are no rules. Even a love as free of pain as yours some day will experience the same horror. I like each day to light a flame of hope on the all but extinguished wick of her faint desires. But do not expect me to have hopes of my own.

Yoshio: One thing clear to me at any rate is that you and I are enemies in love. Well then, what do you give her? Is it hope? By making a decoy of me? That would seem to be all. I think that I can give her the world.

Jitsuko: You lie. All you can do is to steal the world from her. Her world has come in pieces, and it would amount only to being tied to you—a stupid and, what's more, deceitful husband.

Yoshio: That may be for all I care. You can't tell unless you've tried.

Jitsuko: I won't let her be tried any further. She is a flawless, immovable gem. A deranged gem. There must be someone more suitable for rubble like you.

Yoshio: Come out with it plainly. You're afraid to let me see her.

Jitsuko: You don't know, do you, what stratagems an unloved woman will go to so as not to be left alone? You are obviously a person who has never once been alone.

Yoshio: Come now, take me to Hanako.

Jitsuko: As a special favour, please don't shout.

Yoshio: If you don't take me to her, I'll go to her myself.

Jitsuko: Youth, passion—in fact, a complete set of equipment to put in your pocket, and the confidence that any lock can be opened. I'm no match for you. Look at these travel preparations. I was just thinking that we should escape from you by going off on a journey.

Yoshio: Did you say that Hanako wants to go away?

Jitsuko: No. She was acting peevishly and went off to have a nap.

Yoshio: She still has her wits about her.

Jitsuko: No, it is a sign of her madness.

Yoshio: You certainly try your best to make Hanako out to be insane. I suppose that suits your convenience.

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Jitsuko: I have only known Hanako since she lost her mind. That has made her supremely beautiful. The commonplace dreams she had when she was sane have now been completely purified and become precious, strange jewels that lie beyond your comprehension.

Yoshio: Say what you will, flesh is in those dreams.

Jitsuko: Flesh! Please do not make me think of things I dislike.

Yoshio: I am not trying to make you think of anything.

Jitsuko (*suddenly intense*): Please go at once.

Yoshio: What new suggestion is this after all we've gone over?

Jitsuko: I am afraid. I am afraid.

Yoshio: I can well understand that you would be.

Jitsuko: Just supposing she should return to her senses.

Yoshio: Compared to you any madman is in his senses.

Jitsuko: If she should go off and abandon me. . . .

Yoshio: I will make her abandon you.

Jitsuko: I shall die.

Yoshio: You die? I don't think that will make Hanako unhappy. Now if I were to die. . . .

Jitsuko: You think Hanako would at once be stricken with grief? No—that would be the best thing you could do. Please do die. That will give her a reason to go on living.

Yoshio: Which will give you a reason for living. No, thank you kindly. (*He goes towards the bedroom.*)

Jitsuko: Don't go there!

Yoshio: Hanako, I've come!

Jitsuko: Go away, please. After killing me.

Yoshio: Hanako! Hanako!

Jitsuko (*crouching before him*): Go away, go away.

Yoshio (*softly, sidestepping her*): Hanako! Here's the fan. The fan with the moon-flowers. (*He opens the fan and goes towards the bedroom door.*)

Jitsuko: Ohhh! (*She cowers on the floor, hiding her face.*)

(*The door of the bedroom opens and Hanako appears. She holds against her breast the fan with the snow-scene.*)

Scene Four. (Hanako, Yoshio, Jitsuko)

(*A long pause. Hanako slowly approaches Yoshio.*)

Yoshio: It's I, Yoshio. I've kept you waiting for me a long time. I'm sorry, Hanako. I've taken good care of your fan.

Hanako: My . . . fan. . . .

Yoshio: Yes, with the moon-flowers on it. And that fan you have with the snow-scene is mine.

Hanako: My fan . . . your fan. What happened to the fan? Were you looking for a fan?

Yoshio: No. For you. For Hanako.

Hanako: I . . . the fan. . . .

Yoshio: Don't you understand me? Hanako! (*He places his hand on her shoulder and shakes her. As he does so Jitsuko, having recovered her strength, stands and stares motionless at them.*)

Hanako: Yoshio?

Yoshio: Yes, I am Yoshio.

Hanako (*A long pause. She shakes her head almost imperceptibly*): No you are not. You are not.

Yoshio: What are you saying? Have you forgotten me?

Hanako: You look very much like him. Your face is exactly like his, just as I've seen it in dreams. And yet you are different. The faces of all the men in the world are dead, and only Yoshio's face was alive. You are not Yoshio. Your face is dead.

Yoshio: What!

Hanako: You too are a skeleton. Your face is only bones. Why do you look at me that way with your hollow eyes of bone?

Yoshio: Look steadily. Look at me steadily.

Hanako: I am looking. I am looking more steadily than you. (*To Jitsuko*) Jitsuko, you're trying to deceive me again, aren't you? To deceive me and take me away with you on a trip against my wishes. You sent for this total stranger and got him to say that he was Yoshio. You're trying to make me give up the idea of waiting,

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yesterday, today, tomorrow, waiting the same way—aren't you? But I won't give it up. I'll wait longer. I still have in me the strength to wait a long, long time. I am alive. I can tell a dead man's face as soon as I see one.

Jitsuko (*to Yoshio, gently*): Please go. You had best resign yourself to it.

Yoshio (*longingly*): Hanako!

(*Hanako, without turning back, walks to an easy-chair where she sits, facing the audience. Yoshio watches her. A long pause. Yoshio suddenly rushes out.*)

Scene Five. (Jitsuko, Hanako)

Hanako: Come here.

Jitsuko: Yes.

(*It begins to grow dark outside.*)

Hanako: It's evening already, isn't it?

Jitsuko: Yes.

Hanako: In the evening the morning sun shines and the cocks crow, don't they? On an island you don't need a clock.

Jitsuko: Yes.

Hanako: Jitsuko, why do we have to go on a trip?

Jitsuko: We don't have to go any more. We'll stay here always.

Hanako: Will we? Oh, I'm so glad. . . . Jitsuko.

Jitsuko: Yes?

Hanako: That man who came here before. Who was he?

Jitsuko: Did someone come?

Hanako: Yes, I'm sure someone came. He had some business, I think.

Jitsuko: Yes.

Hanako: He was saying something in a loud voice. I hate people who talk in such a loud voice.

Jitsuko: Yes, I hate them too.

Hanako (*playing with the fan again*): That's what waiting is. Waiting, waiting . . . and soon the day ends.

Jitsuko: You wait. I'm not waiting for anything.

Hanako: I wait.

Jitsuko: I wait for nothing.

Hanako: I wait . . . and today has grown dark too.

Jitsuko (*her eyes flashing*): Oh, wonderful life!

(*translated by Donald Keene*)

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Letter from Paris

Princes and Powers

THE Conference of Negro-African Writers and Artists (*Le Congrès des Ecrivains et Artistes Noirs*) opened on Wednesday morning, September 19th, 1956, in the Sorbonne's Amphitheatre Descartes, in Paris. It was one of those bright, warm days and by ten o'clock the lecture hall was already unbearably hot, people choked the entrances and covered the wooden steps. It was hectic with the activity attendant upon the setting up of tape recorders, with the testing of ear-phones, with the lightning of flash-bulbs. Electricity, in fact, filled the hall. Of the people there that first day, I should judge that not quite two-thirds were coloured.

Behind the table at the front of the hall sat eight coloured men. These included the American novelist Richard Wright; Alioune Diop, the editor of *Présence Africaine*, and one of the principal organisers of the conference; the poets Leopold Senghor, from Senegal, and Aimé Cesaire, from Martinique; and the poet-novelist, Jacques Alexis, from Haiti. From Haiti, also, came the President of the Conference, Dr. Price-Mars, a very old and very handsome man.

It was well past ten o'clock when the conference actually opened. Alioune Diop, who rather resembles, in his extreme sobriety, an old-time Baptist minister, made the opening address. He referred to the present gathering as a kind of second Bandung. As at Bandung, the people gathered together here held in common the fact of their subjugation to Europe, or, at the very least, to the European vision of the world. "History," he said, "has treated the blacks in a rather cavalier fashion. I would even say that history has treated black men in a resolutely spiteful fashion were it not for the fact that this history with a large H is nothing more, after all, than the Western interpretation of the life of the world." He referred to the variety of cultures the conference represented, saying that they were genuine cultures and that the ignorance of the West regarding them was largely a matter of convenience. And, in speaking of the relation between politics and culture, he pointed out that the loss of vitality from which all Negro cultures were suffering was due to the fact that their political destinies were not in their hands. A people deprived of political sovereignty finds it very nearly impossible to recreate, for itself, the image of its past, this perpetual recreation being an absolute necessity, if not, indeed, the definition of a living culture.

His speech won a great deal of applause. Yet, I felt that among the dark people in the hall there was, perhaps, some disappointment that he had not been more specific, more bitter, in a word, more demagogical; whereas, among the whites in the hall, there was certainly expressed in their applause a somewhat shamefaced and uneasy relief. And, indeed, the atmosphere was strange. Everyone was tense with the question of which direction the conference would take. Hanging in the air, as real as the heat from which we suffered, were the great spectres of America and Russia, of the battle going on between them for the domination of the world. The ultimate resolution of this battle might very well depend on the earth's non-European population, a population vastly outnumbering Europe's, and which had suffered such injustices at European hands. With the best will in the world, no one now living could undo what past generations had accomplished. The great question was what, exactly, *had* they accomplished: whether the evil, of which there had been so much, alone lived after them, whether the good, and there had been some, had been interred with their bones.

OF THE messages from well-wishers which were read immediately after Diop's speech, the one which caused the greatest stir came from America's W. E. B. DuBois. "I am not present at your meeting," he began, "because the U.S. government will not give me a passport." The reading was interrupted at this point by great waves of laughter, by no means good-natured, and by a roar of applause, which, as it clearly could not have been intended for the State Department, was intended to express admiration for DuBois' plain speaking. "Any American

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Negro travelling abroad today must either not care about Negroes or say what the State Department wishes him to say." This, of course, drew more applause. It also very neatly destroyed whatever effectiveness the five-man American delegation then sitting in the hall might have hoped to have. It was less DuBois' communication which did this than the incontestable fact that he had not been allowed to leave his country. It was a fact which could scarcely be explained or defended: the very attempt at such an explanation, especially for people whose distrust of the West, however richly justified, also tends to make them dangerously blind and hasty, was to be suspected of "caring nothing about Negroes," of saying what the State Department "wished" you to say. It was a fact which increased and seemed to justify the distrust with which all Americans are regarded abroad, and it made yet deeper, for the five American Negroes present, that gulf which yawns between the American Negro and all other men of colour. This is a very sad and dangerous state of affairs, for the American Negro is possibly the only man of colour who can speak of the West with real authority, whose experience, painful as it is, also proves the vitality of the so-transgressed Western ideals. The fact that DuBois was not there and could not, therefore, be engaged in debate, naturally made the more seductive his closing argument: which was that, the future of Africa being socialist, African writers should take the road taken by Russia, Poland, China, etc., and not be "betrayed backwards by the U.S. into colonialism."

When the morning session ended and I was spewed forth with the mob into the bright courtyard, Richard Wright introduced me to the American delegation. And it seemed quite unbelievable for a moment that the five men standing with Wright (and Wright and myself) were defined, and had been brought together in this courtyard, by our relation to the African continent. The chief of the delegation, John Davis, was to be asked just *why* he considered himself a Negro—he was to be told that he certainly did not look like one. He *is* a Negro, of course, from the remarkable legal point of view which obtains in the United States; but, more importantly, as he tried to make clear to his interlocutor, he was a Negro by choice and by depth of involvement —by experience, in fact. But the question of choice in such a context can scarcely be coherent for an African, and the experience referred to, which produces a John Davis, remains a closed book for him.

What, at bottom, distinguished the Americans from the Negroes who surrounded us, men from Nigeria, Senegal, Barbados, Martinique, was the banal and abruptly quite overwhelming fact that we had been born in a society, which, in a way quite inconceivable for Africans, and no longer real for Europeans, was open, and—in a sense which has nothing to do with justice or injustice—was free. It was a society, in short, in which nothing was fixed and we had therefore been born to a greater number of possibilities, wretched as these possibilities seemed at the instant of our birth. Moreover, the land of our forefather's exile had been made, by that travail, our home. It may have been the popular impulse to keep us at the bottom of the perpetually shifting and bewildered populace; but we were, on the other hand, almost personally indispensable to each of them, simply because, without us, they could never have been certain, in such a confusion, where the bottom was; and nothing, in any case, could take away our title to the land which we, too, had purchased with our blood. This results in a psychology very different—at its best and at its worst—from the psychology which is produced by a sense of having been invaded and overrun, the sense of having no recourse whatever against oppression other than overthrowing the machinery of the oppressor. We had been dealing with, had been made and mangled by, another machinery altogether. It had never been in our interest to overthrow it. It had been necessary to make the machinery work for our benefit and the possibility of its doing so had been, so to speak, built in.

We could, therefore, in a way, be considered the connecting link between Africa and the West, the most real and certainly the most shocking of all African contributions to Western cultural life. But the articulation of this reality was another matter. It was clear that our relation to the mysterious continent of Africa would not be clarified until we had found some means of saying, to ourselves and to the world, more about the mysterious American continent than had ever been said before.

M. Lasebikan, from Nigeria, spoke that afternoon on the tonal structure of Youriba poetry, a language spoken by five million people in his country. Lasebikan was a very winning and unassuming personality, dressed in a most arresting costume. What looked like a white lace poncho covered him from head to foot; beneath this he was wearing a very subdued but very ornately figured silk robe, which looked Chinese; and he wore a red velvet toque, a sign, someone told me, that he was a Mohammedan. The Youriba language, Lasebikan explained, had only become an oral language in the middle of the last century, and this had been done by missionaries. His face expressed some sorrow at this point. But—and his face

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brightened again—he lived in the hope that one day an excavation would bring to light a fine literature written by the Youriba people. In the meantime, with great good nature, he resigned himself to sharing with us that literature which already existed.

I doubt that I learned much about the tonal structure of Youriba poetry, but I found myself fascinated by the sensibility which had produced it. M. Lasebikan spoke first in Youriba and then in English. It was perhaps because he so clearly loved his subject that he not only succeeded in conveying the poetry of this extremely strange language, he also conveyed something of the style of life out of which it came. The poems quoted ranged from the devotional to one which described the pounding of yams. And one somehow felt the loneliness and the yearning of the first and the peaceful, rhythmic domesticity of the second. Some of the poetry demanded the use of a marvellously ornate drum, on which were many little bells. It was not the drum it once had been, he told us, but despite whatever mishap had befallen it, I could have listened to him play it for the rest of the afternoon.

He was followed by Leopold Senghor. Senghor is a very dark and impressive figure in a smooth, bespectacled kind of way, and he is very highly regarded as a poet. He was to speak on West African writers and artists. He began by invoking what he called the "spirit of Bandung." In referring to Bandung, he was referring less, he said, to the liberation of black people than he was saluting the reality and the toughness of their culture, which, despite the vicissitudes of their history, had refused to perish. One of the things, said Senghor—perhaps *the* thing—which distinguishes Africans from Europeans is the comparative urgency of their ability to feel. "*Sentir c'est apercevoir.*" The reasoning of the African is not compartmentalised, and, to illustrate this, Senghor used the image of the blood stream in which all things mingle and flow to and through the heart. He told us that the difference between the function of the arts in Europe and their function in Africa lay in the fact that, in Africa, the function of the arts is more present and pervasive, is infinitely less special, "is done by all, for all." Thus, art for art's sake is not a concept which makes any sense in Africa. The division between art and life out of which such a concept comes does not exist there. Art itself is taken to be perishable, to be made again each time it disappears, or is destroyed. What is clung to is the spirit which makes art possible. And the African idea of this spirit is very different from the European idea. European art attempts to imitate nature. African art is concerned with reaching beyond and beneath nature, to contact, and itself become a part of *la force vitale*. The artistic image is not intended to represent the thing itself, but, rather, the reality of the force the thing contains. Thus, the moon is fecundity, the elephant is force.

MUCH of this made great sense to me, even though Senghor was speaking of, and out of, a way of life which I could only very dimly and perhaps somewhat wistfully imagine. It was the æsthetic which attracted me, the idea that the work of art expresses, contains, and is itself a part of that energy which is life. Poems and stories, in the only situation I knew anything about, were never told, except, rarely, to children, and, at the risk of mayhem, in bars. They were written to be read, alone, and by a handful of people at that—there was really beginning to be something suspect in being read by more than a handful. These creations no more insisted on the actual presence of other human beings than they demanded the collaboration of a dancer and a drum. They could not be said to celebrate the society any more than the homage which Western artists sometimes receive can be said to have anything to do with society's celebration of a work of art. The only thing in Western life which seemed even faintly to approximate Senghor's intense sketch of the creative interdependence, the active, actual, joyful intercourse obtaining among African artists and what only a Westerner would call their public, was the atmosphere sometimes created among jazz musicians and their fans during, say, a jam session. But the ghastly isolation of the jazz musician, the neurotic intensity of his listeners, was proof enough that what Senghor meant when he spoke of social art had no reality whatever in Western life. He was speaking out of his past, which had been lived where art was naturally and spontaneously social. (Yet he was not there. Here he was, in Paris, speaking the adopted language in which he also wrote his poetry.)

Just what the specific relation of an artist to his culture says about that culture is a very pretty question. The culture which had produced Senghor seemed, on the face of it, to have a greater coherence as regarded assumptions, traditions, customs, and beliefs than did the Western culture to which it stood in so problematical a relation. And this might very well mean that the culture represented by Senghor was healthier than the culture represented by the hall in which he spoke. But the leap to this conclusion, than which nothing would have seemed easier, was frustrated by the question of just what health was in relation to a culture. Senghor's culture, for example, did not seem to need the lonely activity of the singular intelligence on which the cultural life—the moral life

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—of the West depends. And a really cohesive society, which is one of the attributes, perhaps, of what is taken to be a "healthy" culture, has, generally, and I suspect necessarily, a much lower level of tolerance for the maverick, the dissenter, the man who steals the fire, than have societies in which, the common ground of belief having all but vanished, each man in awful and brutal isolation is for himself, to flower or to perish. Or, not impossibly, to make real and fruitful again that vanished common ground, which, as I take it, is nothing more or less than the culture itself, endangered and rendered nearly inaccessible by the complexities it has itself inevitably created.

THE evening debate rang perpetual changes on two questions. These questions—each of which splintered into a thousand more each time it was asked—were, first: What *is* a culture? This is a difficult question under the most serene circumstances. In the context of the conference, it was a question which was helplessly at the mercy of another one: Is it possible to describe as a culture what may simply be, after all, a history of oppression? That is, is this history and these present facts, which involve so many millions of people, who are divided from each other by so many miles of the globe, which operates, and has operated, under such very different conditions, to such different effects, and which has produced so many different sub-histories, problems, traditions, possibilities, aspirations, assumptions, languages, hybrids—is this history enough to have made of the earth's black populations anything that can legitimately be described as a culture? For what, beyond the fact that all black men at one time or another left Africa, or have remained there, do they really have in common?

And yet, it became clear, as the debate wore on, that there *was* something which all black men held in common, something which cut across opposing points of view, and placed in the same context their widely dissimilar experience. What they held in common was their precarious, their unutterably painful relation to the white world. What they held in common was the necessity to remake the world in their own image, to impose this image on the world, and no longer be controlled by the vision of the world, and of themselves, held by other people. What, in sum, black men held in common was their ache to come into the world as men. And this ache united people who might otherwise have been divided as to what a man should be.

Yet, whether or not this could properly be described as a *cultural* reality, remained another question. Haiti's Jacques Alexis made the rather desperate observation that a cultural survey must have *something* to survey; but then seemed confounded, as indeed we all were, by the dimensions of the particular cultural survey in progress. It was necessary, for example, before one could relate the culture of Haiti to that of Africa, to know what the Haitian culture was. Within Haiti there were a great many cultures. Frenchmen, Negroes, and Indians had bequeathed it quite dissimilar ways of life, Catholics, voodooists, and animists cut across class and colour lines. Alexis described as "pockets" of culture those related and yet quite specific and dissimilar ways of life to be found within the borders of any country in the world, and wished to know by what alchemy these opposing ways of life became a national culture.

SENGHOR remarked, apropos of this question, that one of the great difficulties posed by it, particularly within the borders of Africa herself, was the difficulty of establishing and maintaining contact with the people if one's language had been formed in Europe. And he went on, somewhat later, to make the point that the heritage of the American Negro was an African heritage. He used, as proof of this, a poem of Richard Wright's which was, he said, involved with African tensions and symbols, even though Wright himself had not been aware of this. He suggested that the study of African sources might prove extremely illuminating for American Negroes. For, he suggested, in the same way that "white classics" exist—classic here taken to mean an enduring revelation and statement of a specific, peculiar, cultural sensibility—"black classics" must also exist. (This raised in my mind the question of whether or not "white classics" *did* exist, in distinction, that is, to merely French or English classics.) If *Black Boy*, said Senghor, were to be analysed, it would undoubtedly reveal the African heritage to which it owed its existence; in the same way, I supposed, that Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities* would, upon analysis, reveal its debt to Æschylus.

Yet, in so handsomely presenting Wright with his African heritage, Senghor rather seemed to be taking away his identity. *Black Boy* is the study of the growing up of a Negro boy in the Deep South, and is one of the major American autobiographies. I had never thought of it, as Senghor clearly did, as one of the major *African* autobiographies—only one more document, in fact, speaking of the African's long persecution and exile. Even granted that there was something African in *Black Boy*, as there was undoubtedly something African in all American Negroes, the great question of what this was, and how it had survived, remained wide open. Moreover, *Black Boy* had been written in the

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English language; its form, psychology, moral attitude, preoccupations, in short, its cultural validity, were all due to forces which had nothing to do with Africa. Or was it simply that we had been rendered unable to recognise Africa in it? For it seemed that, in Senghor's vast recreation of the world, the foot-fall of the African would prove to have covered more territory than the foot-fall of the Roman.

THURSDAY'S great event was Aimé Cesaire's speech in the afternoon, dealing with the relation between colonisation and culture. Cesaire is a caramel-coloured man from Martinique, probably around forty, with a great tendency to roundness and smoothness, physically speaking, and with the rather vaguely benign air of a school-teacher. All this changes the moment he begins to speak. It becomes at once apparent that his curious, slow-moving blandness is related to the grace and patience of a jungle cat and that the intelligence behind those spectacles is of a very penetrating and demagogical order.

The cultural crisis through which we are passing today can be summed up thus, said Cesaire: that culture which is strongest from the material and technological point of view threatens to crush all weaker cultures, particularly in a world which, distance counting for nothing, the technologically weaker cultures have no means of protecting themselves. All cultures have, furthermore, an economic, social, and political base, and no culture can continue to live if its political destiny is not in its own hands. "Any political and social régime which destroys the self-determination of a people also destroys the creative power of that people." Now the civilisations of Europe, said Cesaire, speaking very clearly and intensely to a packed and attentive hall, evolved an economy based on capital and the capital was based on black labour; and thus, regardless of whatever arguments Europeans use to defend themselves, and in spite of the absurd palliatives with which they have sometimes tried to soften the blow, the fact, of their domination, in order to accomplish and maintain this domination—in order, in fact, to make money—they destroyed, with utter ruthlessness, everything that stood in their way: languages, customs, tribes, lives; and not only put nothing in its place, but erected, on the contrary, the most tremendous barriers between themselves and the people they ruled. Europeans never had the remotest intention of raising Africans to the Western level: "The famous inferiority complex one is pleased to observe as a characteristic of the colonised is no accident but something very definitely desired and deliberately inculcated by the coloniser." He was interrupted at this point —not for the first time—by long and prolonged applause.

"The situation, therefore, in the colonial countries, is tragic," Cesaire continued. "Wherever colonisation is a fact the indigenous culture begins to rot. And, among these ruins, something begins to be born which is not a culture but a kind of sub-culture, a sub-culture which is condemned to exist on the margin allowed it by European culture. This then becomes the province of a few men, the élite, who find themselves placed in the most artificial conditions, deprived of any revivifying contact with the masses of the people. Under such conditions, this sub-culture has no chance whatever of growing into an active, living culture." And what, he asked, before this situation, can be done? The answer would not be simple. Cesaire spoke of the energy already proven by black cultures in the past, and, declining to believe that this energy no longer existed, declined also to believe that the total obliteration of the existing culture was a condition for the renaissance of black people. "In the culture to be born there will no doubt be old and new elements. How these elements will be mixed is not a question to which any individual can respond. The response must be given by the community. But we can say this: that the response will be given, and not verbally, but in tangible facts, and by action."

This speech, which was very brilliantly delivered (and which had the advantage, also, of being very little concerned, at bottom, with culture), wrung from the audience which heard it the most violent reaction of joy. Cesaire had spoken for those who could not speak and those who could not speak thronged around the table to shake his hand, and kiss him. I myself felt stirred in a very strange and disagreeable way. For Cesaire's case against Europe, which seemed to me unanswerable, was also a very easy case to make. The anatomising of the great injustice which is the irreducible fact of colonialism was yet not enough to give the victims of that injustice a new sense of themselves. One may say, of course, that the very fact that Cesaire had spoken so thrillingly, and in one of the great institutions of Western learning, invested them with this new sense, but I do not think this is so. He had certainly played very skilfully on their emotions and their hopes, but he had not raised the central, tremendous question, which was, simply: What *had* this colonial experience made of them and what were they now to do with it? For they were all, now, whether they liked it or not, related to Europe, stained by the European visions and standards, and their relation to themselves, and to each other, and to their past had changed. Their relation to their poets had also changed, as had the relation of

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their poets to them. Cesaire's speech left out of account one of the great effects of the colonial experience: its creation, precisely, of men like himself.

FRIDAY'S session began in a rather tense atmosphere and this tension continued throughout the day. Diop opened the session by pointing out that each speaker spoke only for himself and could not be considered as speaking for the conference. I imagined that this had something to do with Cesaire's speech of the day before and with some of its effects, among which, apparently, had been a rather sharp exchange between Cesaire and the American delegation.

This was the session during which it became apparent that there was a religious war going on at the conference, a war which suggested, in miniature, some of the tensions dividing Africa. A Protestant minister from the Cameroons, Pastor T. Ekollo, had been forced by the hostility of the audience the day before to abandon a dissertation in defence of Christianity in Africa. He was visibly upset still. "There will be Christians in Africa, even when there is not a white man there," he said, with a tense defiance, and added, with an unconsciously despairing irony, to which, however, no one reacted, "supposing that to be possible." He had been asked how he could defend Christianity in view of what Christians had done in his country. To which his answer was that the doctrine of Christianity was of more moment than the crimes committed by Christians. The audience was extremely cold and hostile, forcing him again, in effect, from the floor. But I felt that this also had something to do with Pastor Ekollo's rather petulant and not notably Christian attitude towards them.

Dr. Marcus James, a priest of the Anglican Church, from Jamaica, picked up where Ekollo left off. Dr. James is a round, very pleasant-looking man, with spectacles. He began with a quotation to the effect that, when the Christian arrived in Africa, he had the Bible and the African had the land; but that, before long, the African had the Bible and the Christian had the land. There was a great deal of laughter at this, in which Dr. James joined. But the postscript to be added today, he said, is that the African not only has the Bible but has found in it a potential weapon for the recovery of his land. The Christians in the hall, who seemed to be in the minority, applauded and stamped their feet at this, but many others now rose and left. Dr. James did not seem to be distressed and went on to discuss the relationship between Christianity and democracy. In Africa, he said, there was none whatever. Africans do not, in fact, believe that Christianity is any longer real for Europeans, due to the immense scaffolding with which they have covered it and the fact that this religion has no effect whatever on their conduct. There are, nevertheless, more than twenty million Christians in Africa, and—Dr. James believed—the future of their country was very largely up to them. The task of making Christianity real in Africa was made the more difficult in that they could expect no help whatever from Europe: "Christianity, as practised by Europeans in Africa, is a cruel travesty." This bitter observation, which was uttered in sorrow, gained a great deal of force from the fact that so genial a man had felt compelled to make it. It made vivid, unanswerable, in a way which rage could not have done, how little the West has respected its own ideals in dealing with subject peoples and suggested that there was a price we would pay for this.

M. Wahal, from the Sudan, spoke in the afternoon on the rôle of the law in culture, using, as an illustration, the rôle the law had played in the history of the American Negro. He spoke at length on the rôle of French law in Africa, pointing out that French law is simply not equipped to deal with the complexity of the African situation. And what is even worse, of course, is that it makes virtually no attempt to do so. The result is that French law, in Africa, is simply a legal means of administering injustice. It is not a solution, either, to revert to African tribal custom, which is also helpless before the complexities of present-day African life. Wahal spoke with a quiet matter-of-factness, which lent great force to the ugly story he was telling, and he concluded by saying that the question was ultimately a political one and that there was no hope of solving it within the framework of the present colonial system.

HE WAS followed by George Lamming. Lamming is tall, raw-boned, untidy, and intense, and one of his real distinctions is his refusal to be intimidated by the fact that he is a genuine writer. He proposed to raise certain questions pertaining to the quality of life to be lived by black people in that hypothetical tomorrow when they would no longer be ruled by whites. "The profession of letters is an untidy one," he began, looking as though he had dressed to prove it. He directed his speech to Aimé Cesaire and Jacques Alexis in particular, and quoted Djuna Barnes: "Too great a sense of identity makes a man feel he can do no wrong. And too little does the same." He suggested that it was important to bear in mind that the word Negro meant black—and meant nothing more than that; and commented on the great variety of heritages, experiences, and points

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of view which the conference had brought together under the heading of this single noun. He wished to suggest that the nature of power was unrelated to pigmentation, that bad faith was a phenomenon which was independent of race. He found—from the point of view of an untidy man of letters—something crippling in the obsession from which Negroes suffered as regards the existence and the attitudes of the Other—this Other being everyone who was not Negro. That black people faced great problems was surely not to be denied and yet the greatest problem facing us was what *we*, Negroes, would do among ourselves "when there was no longer any colonial horse to ride." He pointed out that this was the horse on which a great many Negroes, who were in what he called "the skin trade," hoped to ride to power, power which would be in no way distinguishable from the power they sought to overthrow.

Lamming was insisting on the reverence which is due to the private life. I respected him very much, not only because he raised this question, but because he knew what he was doing. He was concerned with the immensity and the variety of the experience called Negro; he was concerned that one should recognise this variety as wealth. He cited the case of Amos Tutuola's *Palm Wine Drinkard*, which he described as a fantasy, made up of legends, anecdotes, episodes, the product, in fact, of an oral story-telling tradition which disappeared from Western life generations ago. Yet, "Tutuola really *does* speak English. It is *not* his second language." The English did not find the book strange. On the contrary, they were astonished by how truthfully it seemed to speak to them of their own experience. It seemed to me that Lamming was suggesting to the conference a subtle and difficult idea, the idea that part of the great wealth of the Negro experience lay precisely in its double-edgedness. He was suggesting that all Negroes were held in a state of supreme tension between the difficult, dangerous relationship in which they stood to the white world and the relationship, not a whit less painful or dangerous, in which they stood to each other. He was suggesting that in the acceptance of this duality lay their strength.

Lamming was interrupted at about this point, however, for it had lately been decided, in view of the great number of reports still to be read, to limit everyone to twenty minutes. This quite unrealistic rule was not to be observed very closely, especially as regarded the French-speaking delegates. But Lamming put his notes in his pocket and ended by saying that, if as someone had remarked, silence was the only common language, politics, for Negroes, was the only common ground.

THE evening session began with a film, which I missed, and was followed by a speech from Cheik Anta Diop, which—in sum—claimed the ancient Egyptian empire as part of the Negro past. He quite refused to remain within the twenty-minute limit and, while his claims of the deliberate dishonesty of all Egyptian scholars may be quite well founded for all I know, I cannot say that he convinced me. He was, however, a great success in the hall, second only to Aimé Cesaire.

He was followed by Richard Wright. Wright had been acting as liaison man between the American delegation and the Africans and this had placed him in rather a difficult position, since both factions tended to claim him as their spokesman. It had not, of course, occurred to the Americans that he could be anything less, whereas the Africans automatically claimed him because of his great prestige as a novelist and his reputation for calling a spade a spade—particularly if the spade were white. The consciousness of his peculiar, and certainly rather gruelling position weighed on him, I think, rather heavily.

He began by confessing that the paper he had written, while on his farm in Normandy, impressed him as being, after the events of the last few days, inadequate. Some of the things he had observed during the course of the conference had raised questions in him which his paper could not have foreseen. He had not, however, rewritten his paper, but would read it now, exactly as it had been written, interrupting himself whenever what he had written and what he had since been made to feel seemed to be at variance. He was exposing, in short, his conscience to the conference and asking help of them in his confusion.

There was, first of all, he said, a painful contradiction in being at once a Westerner and a black man. "I see both worlds from another, and third, point of view." This fact had nothing to do with his will, his desire, or his choice. It was simply that he had been born in the West and the West had formed him. As a black Westerner, it was difficult to know what one's attitude should be towards three realities which were inextricably woven together in the Western fabric. These were religion, tradition, and imperialism, and in none of these realities had the lives of black men been taken into account.

Wright then went on to speak of the effects of European colonialism in the African colonies. He confessed—bearing in mind always the great gap between human intentions and human effects—that he thought of it as having been, in many ways, liberating, since it smashed old traditions and destroyed old gods. One of the things that had surprised him in the last few days had been the realisation that most of the

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delegates to the conference did not feel as he did. He felt, nevertheless, that, though Europeans had not realised what they were doing in freeing Africans from the "rot" of their past, they had been accomplishing a good. In sum, Wright said, he felt that Europe had brought the Enlightenment to Africa and that what was good for Europe was good for all mankind. I felt that this was, perhaps, a tactless way of phrasing a debatable idea, but Wright went on to express a notion which I found even stranger. And this was that the West, having created an African and Asian élite, should now "give them their heads" and "refuse to be shocked" at the "methods they will feel compelled to use" in unifying their countries. Presumably, this left us in no position to throw stones at Nehru, Nasser, Sukarno, etc. should they decide to use dictatorial methods in order to hasten the "social evolution." In any case, Wright said, these men, the leaders of their countries, once the new social order was established, would voluntarily surrender the "personal power." He did not say what would happen then, but I supposed it would be the Second Coming.

SATURDAY was the last day of the conference, which was scheduled to end with the invitation to the audience to engage with the delegates in the Euro-African dialogue. It was a day marked by much confusion and excitement and discontent—this last on the part of people who felt that the conference had been badly run, or who had not been allowed to read their reports. (They were often the same people.) It was marked, too, by rather a great deal of plain speaking, both on and off, but mostly off, the record. The hall was even more hot and crowded than it had been the first day and the photographers were back.

The entire morning was taken up in an attempt to agree on a "cultural inventory." This had to be done before the conference could draft those resolutions which they were, today, to present to the world. This task would have been extremely difficult even had there obtained in the black world a greater unity—geographical, spiritual, and historical—than is actually the case. Under the circumstances, it was an endeavour complicated by the nearly indefinable complexities of the word "culture," by the fact that no coherent statement had yet been made concerning the relationship of black cultures to each other, and, finally, by the necessity, which had obtained throughout the conference, of avoiding the political issues.

The inability to discuss politics had certainly handicapped the conference, but it could scarcely have been run otherwise. The political question would have caused the conference to lose itself in a war of political ideologies. Moreover, the conference *was* being held in Paris, many of the delegates represented areas which belonged to France, most of them represented areas which were not free. There was also to be considered the delicate position of the American delegation, which had sat throughout the conference uncomfortably aware that they might at any moment be forced to rise and leave the hall.

The declaration of political points of view being thus prohibited, the "cultural" debate which raged in the hall that morning was in perpetual danger of drowning in the sea of the unstated. For, according to his political position, each delegate had a different interpretation of his culture, and a different idea of its future, as well as the means to be used to make that future a reality. A solution of a kind was offered by Senghor's suggestion that two committees be formed, one to take an inventory of the past, and one to deal with present prospects. There was some feeling that two committees were scarcely necessary. Diop suggested that one committee be formed, which, if necessary, could divide itself into two. Then the question arose as to just how the committee should be appointed, whether by countries, or by cultural areas. It was decided, at length, that the committee should be set up on the latter basis, and should have resolutions drafted by noon. "It is by these resolutions," protested Mercer Cook, "that we shall make ourselves known. It cannot be done in an hour."

He was entirely right. At 11.20 a committee of eighteen members had been formed. At 4.00 in the afternoon they were still invisible. By this time, too, the most tremendous impatience reigned in the crowded hall. At 4.25 the impatience of the audience erupted in whistles, catcalls, and stamping of feet. At 4.30 Alioune Diop arrived and officially opened the meeting. He tried to explain some of the difficulties such a conference inevitably encountered and assured the audience that the committee on resolutions would not be absent much longer. In the meantime, in their absence, and in the absence of Dr. Price-Mars, he proposed to read a few messages from well-wishers. But the audience was not really interested in these messages and was manifesting a very definite tendency to get out of hand again when, at 4.55, Dr. Price-Mars entered. His arrival had the effect of calming the audience somewhat and, luckily, the committee on resolutions came in very shortly afterwards. At 5.7 Diop rose to read the document which had come one vote short of being unanimously approved.

As is the way with documents of this kind, it was carefully worded and slightly repetitious.

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This did not make its meaning less clear, nor diminish its importance. It spoke first of the great importance of the cultural inventory here begun in relation to the various black cultures which had been "systematically misunderstood, underestimated, sometimes destroyed." This inventory had confirmed the pressing need for a re-examination of the history of these cultures ("*la vérité historique*") with a view to their re-evaluation. The ignorance concerning them, the errors, and the wilful distortions, were among the great contributing factors to the crisis through which they now were passing, in relation to themselves and to human culture in general. The active aid of writers, artists, theologians, thinkers, scientists, and technicians was necessary for the revival, the rehabilitation, and the development of these cultures as the first step toward their integration in the active cultural life of the world. Black men, whatever their political and religious beliefs, were united in believing that the health and growth of these cultures could not possibly come about until colonialism, the exploitation of undeveloped peoples, and racial discrimination had come to an end. (At this point the conference expressed its regret at the involuntary absence of the South African delegation and the reading was interrupted by prolonged and violent applause.) All people, the document continued, had the right to be able to place themselves in fruitful contact with their national cultural values and to benefit from the instruction and education which could be afforded them within this framework. It spoke of the progress which had taken place in the world in the last few years and stated that this progress permitted one to hope for the general abolition of the colonial system and the total and universal end of racial discrimination. And ended: "Our conference, which respects the cultures of all countries and appreciates their contributions to the progress of civilisation, engages all black men in the defence, the illustration, and the dissemination throughout the world of the national values of their people. We, black writers and artists, proclaim our brotherhood toward all men and expect of them ('*nous attendons d'eux*') the manifestation of this same brotherhood toward our people."

When the applause in which the last words of this document were very nearly drowned had ended, Diop pointed out that this was not a declaration of war; it was, rather, he said, a declaration of love—for the culture, European, which had been of such importance in the history of mankind. But it had been very keenly felt that it was now necessary for black men to make the effort to define themselves "*au lieu d'être toujours défini par les autres.*" Black men had resolved "to take their destinies into their own hands." He spoke of plans for the setting up of an international association for the dissemination of black culture and, at 5.22, Dr. Price-Mars officially closed the conference.

James Baldwin

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NOTES FROM A DIARY

"Does our feeling about Hungary remind you of what your generation felt in the 1930's?" an Oxford undergraduate asked me at a meeting in the Union held on behalf of the Hungarian refugees. Until now, he told me, undergraduates had felt leaderless and without a cause to care about. I felt faintly surprised that they should want to care about causes, remembering the disadvantages of doing so.

"Does our kind of reaction to things seem naïve and clumsy?" "Nothing, of course, could have been less sophisticated than undergraduate anti-Fascism," I replied.

Yes. The Oxford Union meeting showed that the response of Oxford youth to Hungary has been very like that of an earlier generation to Spain. The same young, rather bored with themselves and very bored with everything else, suddenly awakened by a demand on their sympathies by other human beings in a country all one prison. Once again inhumanity—the oppression of a people whose resistance and outcries have been heard—has made politics human again. As Peter Wiles said at this meeting: "The twelve extremely disorderly and unshaven young men from Oxford and Cambridge who took medical supplies to Hungary received a tremendous emotional welcome everywhere they went. In fact, it is not too much to say that they will be remembered in Hungary as Byron was remembered in Greece."

The Politics of the Unpolitical

We seem to be back at the politics of the unpolitical, when those, especially the young, who do not think of politics in terms of parties, intrigues, and structures, are infusing passion into what they would like to think a simple moral situation. As usual, they are being badly let down by the political leaders, who present them with a distorted scene instead of the straightforward one in which they feel they could act without compromise. Another undergraduate writes: "The issue was quite clear to me until Suez. Since then I've been unable to *feel* about the Hungarians. I would willingly go and fight for them, however hopeless, if I didn't find myself with one part of me despairing for my country as well as the other militant for Hungary free from Russia: and until the conflict resolves itself, I find myself impotent to do either."

This demonstrates that though the feelings are much the same, the situation is in many ways different. Twenty years ago, the cause of the Spanish Republic seemed as good as a public cause could possibly be. Moreover, it offered a scene of action, and prescribed the nature of the action required: to go to Spain. There was the more dubious benefit of a politics from outside, intervening in Spain, concerning which we had illusions. Those who today are the self-branded destroyers of Hungarian liberty were then the leaders of the Popular Front.

Today a meeting is held to discuss—What can be done? Apart from Mr. Philip Toynbee's plan for a Youth Crusade to Hungary which has the double purpose of reproaching the Russians and confessing our own guilt about Suez, the most positive proposals of the meeting were those made by Mr. Peter Wiles, and these were concerned with the material needs of Hungarians. They need plate glass for broken windows, more than they need clothes, he said. George Mikes suggested that there should be no more cultural relations with Russia—the kind of suggestion which stirs in the English even today a lingering uneasy memory of the First World War, when orchestras were not allowed to play Beethoven.

However, when the young envy an older generation I suspect that they often envy them for their illusions. We were crammed with illusions—about Stalinist Russia, about Collective Security, about the League of Nations. Today, Sir Anthony Eden, Marshal Bulganin, and President Eisenhower have left us with no excuse for having illusions about anything at all. It is true that Mr. Gaitskell also is a kind of illusionist, when (if he is correctly reported) he says—for example—"The first essential thing we must do as a nation is to say to the United Nations: 'We obey you. We accept whatever you say'; and set an example by reacting to the collective decisions of the United Nations." (*The Observer*, November 25th, 1956.)

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I think really my answer to the two undergraduates would be: "Avoid the mistakes of the 1930's, because you have a chance to do so. The situation in Suez is a changing one, and you can help change it. We have the power to put England right with the world, perhaps through the United Nations. But Mr. Gaitskell's suggestion that the correct attitude towards the United Nations is to set an example of blind obedience to it, is the kind of suggestion the young should resist if they are ever to help the satellite countries. The fact is that the United Nations is an almost unworkable institution, now becoming heavily biased against the interests and cause of democracy. To recommend obedience to it without saying this, is to contribute to the illusion which permits it to function when democracies agree to obey it, to fail when dictatorships refuse."

This reply suggests that if the young are to help Hungary through politics, they must submit to tasks much more intellectually demanding than those of the 30's. They must struggle to make the United Nations work as effectively when it is confronted by dictatorship as when it is confronted by democracy. They must try to make something of Western Europe, and of NATO. They must form opinions about the colonies, and about a common policy of European democracies and America.

It is all very wearing, the point being that the democracies have reached a stage when a miracle is required: that governments should be backed by educated, vigilant, reflective public opinion. Political parties offer nothing here. Conservatives are incorrigible, and socialists still put trust in the automatism of the class interests they are supposed to represent.

Hungary and Suez from America

I was in America at the time of the Polish and Hungarian demonstrations (leading, in Hungary, to rebellion) and of the French and British ultimatum to Egypt.

There is a widespread idea that Americans did not care about Hungary, whereas they were completely united in their condemnation of our action in Suez. This is about as true as to say that the whole British people were behind what is called the "British action against Egypt."

There were large demonstrations outside the United Nations building about Hungary, mostly of people who seemed to want the U.S. to go to war immediately in support of "the rebels." The nucleus of people who care in any place about what is happening far away, cared greatly about refugees. There was a great deal in the newspapers and on the radio about Poland and Hungary. To me, being in America, these events seemed just as vividly present as, later, in Europe.

State Department officials were extremely resentful of the Anglo-French action against Egypt, understandably so, I should have thought. America, as a nation, has perhaps something of the psychology of the generous rich individual. Americans are generous, but they dislike being treated as "suckers". They do not like us to put them in a position in which we exploit the fact that they cannot endure our defeat so will have to help us out.

But the reports of American reactions over Suez all seem to me to underestimate one factor: that a situation which, for the first forty-eight hours, was imposed on Americans by us and therefore not "theirs," within a week had become one in which they were deeply and separately involved. For the first two days it was British and French political action: after this, it was the result of American policy under Dulles. When America started taking reprisals in the Assembly then a good many people—George Kennan is an outstanding example—were more shocked by the spectacle of America denouncing her European allies than by what the French and British had done.

I met several Americans who defended the British action. In Cincinnati, I spoke to a group of editors and business men who study foreign affairs. I said that I did not approve of this aggression, but nevertheless I thought it more important in Cincinnati to explain it in terms of American inaction in the Middle East than to air my opinions. After I had ended, a much-respected Episcopalian minister got up and defended the British and French. He cited the inaction of the democracies when Hitler invaded the Rhineland to show that if an action in Egypt today has unfortunate repercussions in Hungary, inaction against a dictatorship can be even more disastrous.

In Tulsa, Oklahoma, I lunched with members of the local Hadassah organisation. This was before Suez, but I found that they were already concerned with what they regarded as the impending attack on Israel. It was therefore not surprising to me that most of the Jewish intellectuals I met later in New York sympathised with the ultimatum to Egypt.

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In Chicago I was asked suddenly to replace an absent speaker at a luncheon club gathering organised by the Chicago *Sun-Times*. (The other speakers were James T. Farrell and Cornelius Vanderbilt.) As in Cincinnati, I concentrated more on explaining what had happened in terms of American than of Western European policy. I said Anglo-American relations were like a marriage in which the lack of imagination of one partner drives the other to immorality: and I pointed out that one man's Suez is another man's Panama. All this was quite well received.

So after a few days, the Middle East question for Americans was not so much whether they disagreed with Eden and Mollet and Ben Gurion as whether they agreed with Eisenhower or Stevenson. Suez, like Hungary, somehow went into the maw of the Eisenhower supporters. It followed that Stevenson was against turning on America's allies, and blamed the Dulles policy for everything that was happening in the Middle East. Therefore the curious situation arose that the kind of person who in the London *Observer* or the Paris *Express* would be attacking Eden and Mollet, would, in America, be defending them against the Eisenhower administration.

U.S. and U.N.

During these days, of debates in the Assembly on Hungary and Suez, television (always assumed here to be "worse" in the U.S. than in Europe) played a great rôle. People I know in New York sat up till 3 a.m. watching the Assembly debates. I happened to be at Chicago airport when, on the T.V. screen, Sir Pierson Dixon was defending British policy. Travellers listened with the greatest attention to his arguments (which together with his care-worn expression, his frequent resource to the glass of water in front of him, had a kind of impressive inefficacity).

The United Nations, with its enormous honeycomb skyscraper, its televised assembly, its refractory foreigners, sometimes seems to me like an experimental institution—something connected vaguely with Advanced Education for delinquents—which New Yorkers are harbouring on American soil. So long as it is not China, Americans are in favour of increasing the number of nations in the U.N., almost regardless of the side they are on. So long as the enlarged Assembly votes against the interests of Britain and France, Americans will exhort us all to obey in the name of democratic decisions. Meanwhile, a majority of nations, most of which have governments opposed to democracy, will predominate in the "world parliament". A great American authority on foreign policy, foreshadowing these developments to me, said: "The day will come when the South American, African, and Asian countries will get together and out-vote the U.S. on some matter which is a vital American interest. And when that happens, the Senate will turn on the United Nations and see that it is kicked out of American territory."

Stevenson and the Electors

American students corresponding to the Oxford undergraduates I have quoted, were as attached to the idea of Stevenson as the English undergraduates to the hypothesis of the pure unsullied cause. "It would be a tragedy if we do not elect the man who would be the greatest President since Lincoln." Of course, this coming from a student at the University of the South, was an exceptional point of view. At Sewanee I was told that more than half the Faculty was pro-Stevenson, more than half the student body pro-Eisenhower.

The result was surely a vote against Stevenson as well as a vote for Eisenhower. Seeing Stevenson on T.V., and reading reports of his appearances, I was often reminded of Sir Anthony Eden. Stevenson and Eden are Cheshire cats among politicians: occasionally they emanate on the television screen, or in the boughs of a tree, displaying a smile and rows of very white teeth. One feels them struggling bravely not to dissolve. They do not inspire one with the sense that their existence really continues when they are not actually present. Churchill and Eisenhower are obvious examples of continuity. Behind doors, in the middle of the night, in the fog and stress, one feels them palpably going on.

It is typical of Stevenson's emanation that the thing his supporters most insisted on saying about him during this election was that he was not saying the things he wanted to say. The party machine, etc. . . . Yet every politician has a party machine, and few public leaders are able to say what they want to say. The test of their suitability is whether when they do say something, they give the impression of wanting to say it. There may be private merit, but there is a lack of public qualification, in giving the impression that one's words are replacing much

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better ones which might proceed from one, but for the advice of the experts.

Stevenson's supporters may be right that he would have made a great President, and they are almost certainly justified in their panic at the prospect of a President Nixon (the day after the Franco-British ultimatum to Egypt, Nixon made a speech declaring America's independence of her allies). But in his second running as Presidential candidate, Stevenson did not live up to the promise of his first appearance. He was not, as he had been, memorable.

Meeting with Rakosi

In the second summer after the war, I went to Budapest to give some talks for the British Council. Those seem very far off days now. Although Communists were in the government, Rakosi being deputy prime minister, the Communist coup was by no means completed. I stayed in Budapest with Count Michael Karolyi, who had returned to Hungary in 1946, after his exile which began in 1919 (his memoirs, published by Cape earlier this year, make fascinating reading today). Karolyi at this time performed the functions of a kind of roving Foreign Minister. He favoured the idea of a Danubian Federation, which would form a buffer between East and West, and I remember him telling me at the time that the Communist leader whom he found most sympathetic to his ideas, and most intelligent as a personality, was Tito.

One evening Countess Karolyi invited Rakosi to dinner. It was a small party consisting of the Karolyis, Rakosi, a lady who was writing about Hungary for the *New Statesman*, and myself. Rakosi arrived in a large American car with two guards who remained posted outside the house. He was thick-set and tough-looking. As soon as we had been introduced, he said to me (in English, I think, but perhaps he spoke French): "You are English, huh? You come from that Fascist country?" This was at the time of the Labour Government. I asked him why we were a Fascist country. "For two reasons. One, the Labour Party has not filled the British Army with socialist generals. Two, the Labour Party has not taken over Scotland Yard." This seemed a Through-the-Looking-Glass definition of a Fascist country, so I said: "But look what we have done for India." At this, the *New Statesman* lady contradicted me, taking Rakosi's side and pointing to our "Fascist" behaviour in various parts of the world.

The party was enlivened by Rakosi's accounts of his life in various prisons under various governments. Altogether, he said, he had spent sixteen years in prison, eleven of them in solitary confinement. (From what he told me, one cannot really blame him if he thought that the difference between being a government and being governed was that between being out of and inside prison.) He said that all the Party members of his government had been educated by him in prisons to which they had been sent. "A political prisoner becomes a virtuoso of his imprisonment," he said. And he illustrated this by a description of his time during the war.

Hitler sent the Horthy government his own special plans for ideal cells for the most dangerous prisoners. In Hungary, these consisted of three metal cells at the top of a flight of stairs, separate from the rest of the prison; here there were kept the most dangerous political prisoners. "We were in contact with the outside world throughout the whole war," said Rakosi. "In fact, we saw all the instructions sent to the prison governor before he himself did. What they had overlooked, was that the warder who was responsible for us was himself a Communist."

In his cell, there was, for some reason, a map of Europe on the wall. Rakosi, getting all the governor's information every day before he did, used to follow the progress of the war on this. However, he knew better than to mark the map, or even touch it. One day—it was the day of the fall of Belleville before the German invasion of France—the prison governor came into the cell. Rakosi saw him looking sideways at the map to see whether the shining surface had been finger-marked at Belleville. After a few moments, he left the cell, clanging the door. Rakosi lifted his arms and expelled a gasp of relief. At that moment the door opened quickly, the governor popped his head in and said: "Ah, you *are* in touch with the outside world!"

Stories like this perhaps throw light on Rakosi, though I did not discover in them what Karolyi calls in his memoirs Rakosi's "notorious charm."

Stephen Spender

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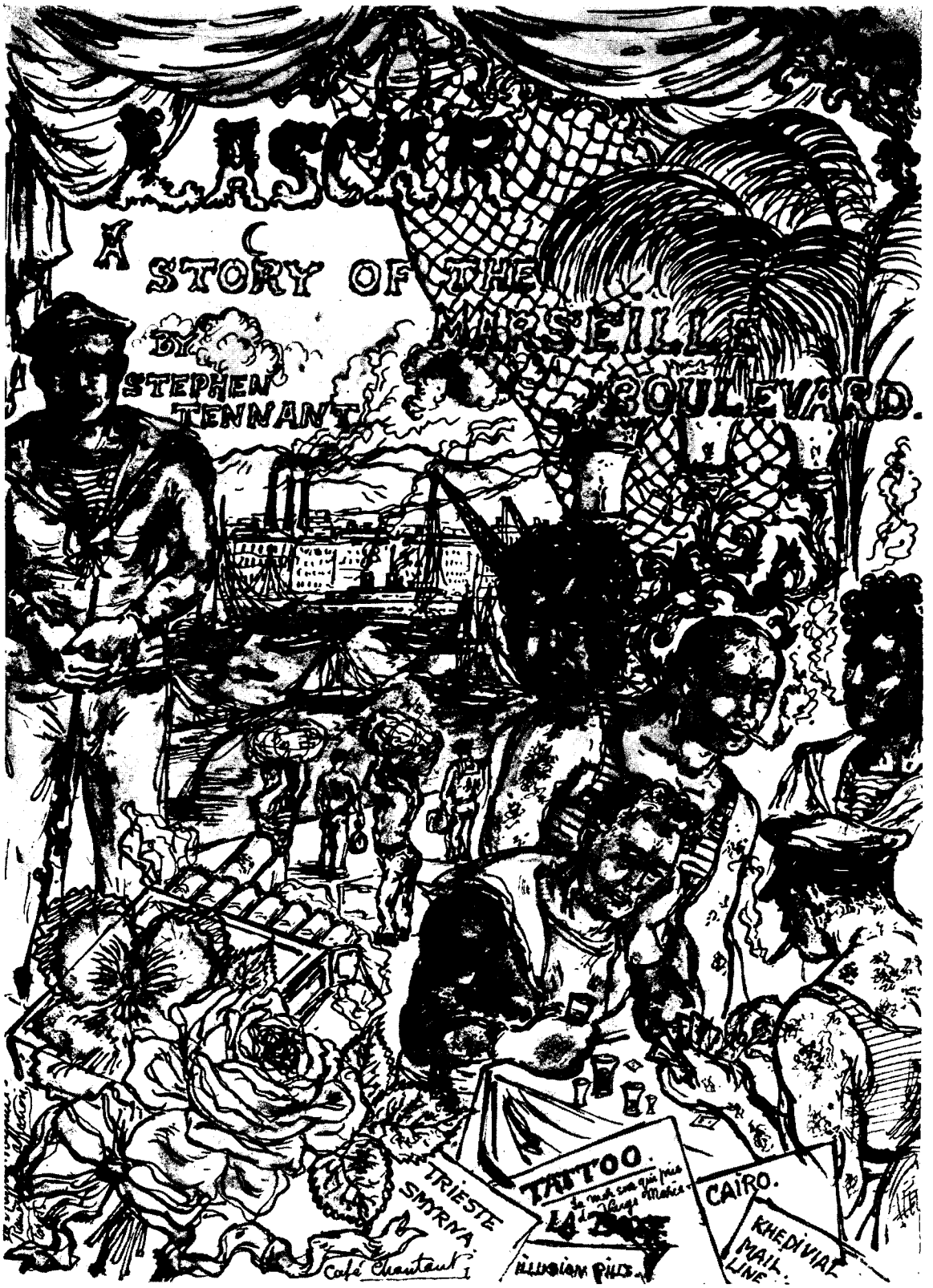

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Art

STEPHEN TENNANT

IN 1928, I lived in a place called Malvern, Melbourne, which is, or was then, a suburb of unrelieved architectural horror, though of great natural beauty—with villas like builders' nightmares set in parks and gardens glowing with gold wattle, and loud with the shriek of purple flowering gums. I went to a Presbyterian school ("the oldest in Victoria, the biggest in Australia, and the best in the world") whose puritan tradition of healthy philistinism was even more vigorous than were those of the academies in Scotland from which it sprang. Nurtured in this mental climate and décor, it is not surprising that my first recollection of Stephen Tennant's name should be wrapped in a profound disapproval. For there arrived, in this year, a letter to my mother from Stephen, in which he described, with handwriting that spiralled over the leaves like the tendrils of a vine, the alterations he was making to his house, Wilsford Manor, near Salisbury, in England. As my mother read this letter to me, her growing enchantment at his account of the gutting of an Edwardian mansion and its transformation into an oriental-southern-English dream, was matched by my deepening suspicion: for it was clear to me that none of the fantastic decorations with which Wilsford was being embellished was either necessary or useful in the least. When my mother ended her account, her voice saturated with nostalgia for England and for extravagance (in all the senses of the word), she raised her enraptured eyes for my reaction. I gave it with the authority of a child of John Knox and of the Southern Cross: "It's a waste of money," I said, in flat, censorious tones.

I did not see Wilsford until twelve years later, but did so in circumstances which, for savouring its rare peculiarity, could never have been bettered. By the end of 1940, the worship of "austerity" not as a positive virtue, but as the justification of the negation of all joy, was already settling like a sterile blight on England. I was by then one of a "demonstration platoon" of N.C.O.s at Bulford, whose task it was to act as guinea-pigs for the Officer Cadet Training Unit there: that is, to perform the manœuvres these privileged wretches were being slave-driven to perfect, with even greater panache and efficiency. In short, life was arduous, and as for Bulford itself . . . who, who has not seen the dump, can imagine its organised chaos, its Boer War atmosphere of seedy squalor? At this moment there came, from Stephen Tennant, an invitation to visit Wilsford Manor just nearby.

I accepted, but after an initial doubt. Stephen is the son of Pamela Wyndham, who was the adored and adoring friend of my maternal grandmother. (Pamela Wyndham, one of the "Three Graces" of John Singer Sargent's painting, became the wife of Lord Glenconner, Stephen's father, and then of his step-father, Lord Grey of Fallodon.) This friendship, I knew, had been so intense, so elevated, so devoted . . . it seemed highly likely that the representatives of the younger generations would loathe each other on sight: that a visit to Wilsford might be an ordeal even more exhausting than were the rigours of the "demonstration platoon." I therefore clopped along the road from Bulford to Amesbury in my army boots, and in a mood of considerable reserve.

Wilsford was built in 1906, by the architect Det Mar Blow. In appearance, it is Edwardian-Elizabethan—comfortable, gracious and, though a little odd, as befits an *avant-garde* construction of the period, conventional on the whole. The door was opened by a footman dressed like a barman in a white coat, and I was ushered into . . . but into which room *was* I ushered? The greatest strangeness of Stephen's alterations to Wilsford is that the individuality of each room is abolished, and the whole house has become one continuous, though constantly changing, apartment. It is as if the floors had been flooded by a sea of carpets, and the doors

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washed away, so that one sails through the walls, one room inviting you into the next: as happens in Moorish palaces, where the Nordic door, that symbol of privacy and silence, has equally, magically, disappeared. And as also happens in Islamic interiors, the floors—which, in Europe, are something one merely treads on—were restored to their full importance, for the level of most of the furniture had been comfortably lowered in the direction of the ground. The utilitarian staircase had been swathed in great net hangings, so that one drifted up its landings like a merman. Aloft, the ceilings were inlaid with casual, coloured shells. Outside, in startling contrast, I could see the English-green garden and grey afternoon.

Stephen now made his appearance, quite evidently as nervous as was I. Sixteen years ago, he still possessed a fantastic physical beauty which seemed almost monstrous in its perfection, and he crouched on the cushions looking like an exquisite, sad faun. Searching desperately for safe gambits, we talked about "the war." "I was nearly killed," he told me, "last night in the Savoy Hotel" (a landmine had fallen in the embankment gardens). Hoping to flatter him, I dropped—as they would have said at Bulford—a "clanger." Stephen, at some incredibly early age, had illustrated a volume that his mother had published, and I told him now that I had been "brought up on" this book: unintentionally implying that he was some artistic ancient, some Arthur Rackham of a venerable J. M. Barrie past. He writhed visibly, and rang for whisky.

This helping, we both thawed: and I grew conscious of what I think is most remarkable about Stephen (even more so, perhaps, than the variety of his productions as an artist): his faculty of being constantly aware. For most of us, the moments when we intensely apprehend the world are the rare summits to which we occasionally soar from the clod-hopping day-to-dayness of our lazy being. But Stephen (as much, I suspect, by self-discipline as by native talent) has the gift of living perpetually in top gear: of being fascinated, it would seem, by everything, and always: of making of his daily life a kind of epitome of experience that is in itself a work of art. But even more attractive is his gift for inducing a companion—even if only momentarily—to be as eager and alert as he. His conversation is poetical and imaginative, incisive and realistic—and enlivened, I am glad to say, by occasional asperities. But it is never—as is often the sad case with men of vivid personality and conversational virtuosity—an ultimately intolerable monologue. For Stephen is really absorbed by you and what you say—even when he may think you dull, and your notions idiotic. And with manners that are effortless, solicitous, and engaging, he invites his companion into a dialogue, in which the evocations of a person, or of a work of art, or of some natural object, make each of these seem to grow in stature and significance, and become more real. . . .

OF STEPHEN'S work for the theatre and the ballet, or of his writings in poetry and prose, I cannot speak with first-hand knowledge; but his paintings I know well, and much admire. He is, I should think, one of the most unfashionable artists working in England today, in that his pictures belong to no school or tendency whatever. To begin by describing what they are not. There are no profundities of plastic invention in them at all—their charm and their magic reside entirely in their potency as images: as pictorial evocations of feeling and of mood. (In the same way, one may say that the pictures of Blake, or of the pre-Raphaelites, are of negligible interest plastically, but of the utmost power in their faculty of evoking sensation.) At first sight, Stephen's paintings might look like the Victorian song-sheets that Alfred Concanen, and earlier, forgotten artists, designed in sharp, luminous colours, and simple, expressive lines, with such feeling for atmosphere that their period flavour is, even now, as strong as ever. But this is not to say that Stephen Tennant is a "neo-primitive" artist—one of the fashionable tribe who pursue a spurious simplicity with sophisticated zeal. The point is that, however consciously his pictures may be contrived, he does achieve, because of a real spontaneity of feeling, a quite authentic primitive quality in his art.

Let me describe a typical Tennant picture. Somewhere towards the centre of it, there will be a view, like that in a garish seaside postcard, of some "exotic" scene—Mediterranean, Pacific, Mexican, Hawaiian. . . . Grouped around this, with no regard for perspective—but with a great regard for design—will be little groups of appropriate personages, usually of a *louche* description. Decorative elements are quite arbitrarily inserted—flowers, and appetising bottles, and tattoo marks, and sumptuous textiles—and then (the characteristic Tennant touch) strange handwritten lists, in decorative calligraphy like that which one sees on fair-ground notices, of the artist's favourite obsessions: the names of scents, of *couturiers*, of heavenly bodies, of drinks, of shipping lines, of circus acrobats, of music halls. . . . The hues are bright and jewelled, the lines sensuous and affectionate, and all these apparently unrelated elements are knit together with the same kind of skill that the oriental

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designers had for gathering harmoniously on one page the varied images which, once thus assembled, created a coherent dream. . . .

It can be said that pictures of this kind are "decadent"; but decadent works of art are not so easy to make as might be thought: in fact, the weakness of such creations here in England (as opposed, for instance, to those of American and Continental European artists) is how feeble they often are, and only titillating. To be a decadent of spirit—to portray, that is, the anguished beauty of a world that falls apart—needs energy, intelligence, and a deep sense of sorrow. Stephen Tennant is a painter in love with banished, unattainable delights; and though he paints a vision of forbidden pleasures, the total impression which his pictures give is one of innocence.

Colin MacInnes

The exhibition of Stephen Tennant's paintings at Gallery One, 20 D'Arblay Street, Soho, W.1 continues until January 9th.

Objects

ALL that which moves outside our sort of why,
Those wordless creatures who are there as well,
Remote from mourning yet in sight and cry,
Make time more golden than we meant to tell.

Tearless, their surfaces appear as deep
As any longing we believe we had;
If shapes can so to their own edges keep,
No separation proves a being bad.

There is less grief than wonder on the whole,
Even at sunset, though, of course, we care
Each time the same old shadow falls across

A person who is not. What then? Some soul,
Light in her bestial substance, well aware,
Extols the silence of how soon a loss.

W. H. Auden

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"Education and the Class System"

THE article by Mr. Crosland, "Education and the Class System" (ENCOUNTER, September 1956), was intelligent and generous-minded. But it gave me the impression that its writer had had no experience with large groups of ordinary schoolchildren in a state school system. I have; and I believe, on the basis of my experience, that Mr. Crosland has little idea of the real problems which exist and how difficult they are to solve.

I am in agreement with some of Mr. Crosland's points: every attempt should be made to achieve as much equal educational opportunity as possible; the eleven-plus examination has serious faults and classification of children at that age is risky—at least for children in the middle ranges of intelligence; the quality of secondary modern schools should be improved; and more children should go to universities and technical colleges.

I should like, however, to deal with some of Mr. Crosland's concrete criticisms and suggestions, beginning with his comments about the 1944 Education Act and the grammar schools. He points out that the 1944 Act abolished fees and standardised entry procedure to these schools, to make their advantages open to children of all social classes. "This aim has not yet been fully realised. *The class distribution* of the grammar school population is *still markedly askew* (my italics). The middle class heavily over-represented; the upper working class, with one-third of grammar school places, now reasonably represented; but the lower working class, with only 15 per cent of places, still heavily under-represented." Moreover, middle-class children are not only over-represented, but do much better in the grammar schools, stay longer, and show more academic promise on leaving; and, says Mr. Crosland, "These contrasts are much larger than can be explained on genetic grounds." He believes that the proportion of children with high I.Q.s is greater among the middle than among the working class; but he believes that, even so, many more lower working-class children should be in grammar schools. He finds that not enough of them are so because of social influences—less-educated parents, crowded homes, smaller opportunities for extra-curricular learning, etc. He concludes that, for the present, equal educational opportunity is bound to be limited.

The difficulty is that Mr. Crosland is trying to deal with two things, not one. If the problem is one of educational aptitude *alone*, grammar school places must go to the children best able to profit from them, regardless of background; "class representation" becomes pointless. One can, however, discuss "class representation" in schools if *social* factors are to be considered in allotting places. If Mr. Crosland's ideal society requires each socio-economic group to have its due percentage of children in grammar schools, it could be done; but it would have nothing whatever to do with educational aptitudes, distribution of intelligence, and whom a particular sort of education could most benefit. Equal opportunity, it is often forgotten, does not mean the *same* opportunity.

Mr. Crosland admits, "For the present, equal opportunity is subject to definite limitations." In fact, equal opportunity is *always* subject to limitations, in any but a hypothetical society. First, as Mr. Crosland agrees, not all children are born equal. Some are born more intelligent than others. Some children come from good homes, where parents take intelligent trouble over them, and others do not. Short of removing every child forcibly from its parents and bringing it up in a state institution (which has its disadvantages) there is no way of ensuring that all children have equally good backgrounds.

Nor are differences between homes always related to money. In two families, each with a father earning ten pounds a week and with two children, one can and does provide the children with a good background, because the parents are intelligent, adequate personalities; the other doesn't, because the father's interests are confined to beer, the pools, and TV, and the mother is lazy and shiftless.

I worked some years as a psychologist in the Chicago public—*i.e. state*—school system, after having first done some teaching. In Chicago, as in most other places, residential districts are directly related to incomes. So the average I.Q. and academic achievement levels varied greatly from school to school. But *within each school*, the differences between what parents did for

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their children—parents of roughly comparable educational, social, and economic levels—were striking. Some schools tried to provide "greater educational opportunity" by extra-curricular and library activities. They found that these, though valuable, were most helpful for the children from better homes. They participated regularly; the others seldom, if ever.

There is, unfortunately, no short-term way of changing these facts. We should try; but we must recognise that it is a long, uphill struggle. For unluckily, there is a vicious circle. Inadequate, ineffective parents provide poor homes, produce (not always, but often) children who themselves become inadequate, ineffective parents, who produce . . . and so it goes on. None of this—as a small child would say—is *fair*. Unfortunately, Nature and life are *not* fair. We ought to try to make their impact as fair as possible. But the cost of outstanding social contributions is some inequality, and a strict equality in education would diminish these while diminishing a lot of other human and humane qualities. Only a compromise—as in so much else in a progressive society—is possible.

Mr. Crosland goes on to suggest that, to promote equal educational opportunity, the private schools should be gradually integrated into the state school system, and that there should be 100 per cent free competitive entry. "By this solution the public schools . . . would steadily grow more socially heterogeneous. . . . No doubt middle-class children would remain for some time over-represented. . . . But the over-representation would at least be based on genuine differences in intelligence, and not on the adventitious possession of private means; and in any event, it would be much less marked than now."

I doubt this assumption. Indeed, I should hazard the guess that the overwhelming majority of children now in public schools would gain competitive places in them; that middle-class children would remain over-represented not "for *some time*" but for a *long time*; and that the main result of this new system of entry—besides the desirable one of admitting a few more capable children of poorer parents—would be the freeing of middle-class parents from the burden of school fees. I have no objection to this proposed reform, but I doubt that it will accomplish what Mr. Crosland claims.

Mr. Crosland then turns to the comprehensive school, which he highly favours. But though comprehensive schools can help to promote social equality and easy mixing of classes, they really cannot accomplish all Mr. Crosland claims for them. American experience has by no means been as simple as he thinks. That children from all backgrounds mix freely in the same (comprehensive) high school in America is only a half-truth. In a small town, with only one high school, it might be true. In larger cities, with several, it is often untrue. Families of the same socio-economic group tend to live in the same areas; so children often find themselves in school with others from similar backgrounds; not entirely, since a prosperous neighbourhood may lie cheek-by-jowl with an underprivileged one, but mainly.

In Chicago, it was fairly easy to get permission to attend a high school outside one's own district. So the first week of term was a nightmare to the administrative staff, as students transferred to schools they thought preferable for social or other reasons. Faculty, students, and parents were keenly aware of the relative social and academic standings of the various high schools, and parents often moved from one district to another to have the child attend "a better high school." In Britain, once housing were easier, this moving and transferring could be developed into a fine art. It was certainly a skill in egalitarian Chicago.

There is another point. Students in American high schools are divided into groups according to the courses they follow. So students in a "commercial course" may go through four years without socially knowing those in the "college preparatory" courses. In Chicago these groups seldom mix—chiefly for administrative reasons. Since "college preparatory" students usually come from higher economic groups than "commercial" ones, some social distinction is bound to occur.

In some American State schools, students are also divided according to ability, which Mr. Crosland favours. In my junior high school ("junior high schools" take children aged twelve to fifteen) there were nine rooms with forty children in each of them—360 children in my grade alone. We were grouped into sections of three rooms each for art, music, gym, etc., and saw very little of the other sections. No announcement was ever made about the reason for being in a particular room. We were not called "Stream A" or "Stream B." Every effort was made to treat us all equally. Yet before we had been in that school for half a term, everyone —even in the "lowest room" (and there was one, 207!)—knew the exact place of each room in the intelligence hierarchy. Comments about "the dummies in Room 207" were standard and frequent. The children in the lowest rooms tended to come from the poorer homes. That, too, in democratic, egalitarian Chicago was universally remarked.

To point out these problems is not to say that comprehensive schools have no merits. But it is

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unwise to expect too much from them *in promoting social equality*. In a country with as fine social distinctions as Britain, the comprehensive school can only do a limited amount. It may be better than nothing. And if parents come genuinely to *want* social equality and the easy mixing of children from all classes, it can do much more, reinforced by home sentiment. Whether the majority of the British population *want* social equality, I am not sure. As an American, I think they *ought* to want it. But I would not force them to want it through a compulsory egalitarian education.

Mr. Crosland rightly comments on the low academic standards in American high schools, but points out that good ones have been achieved in the new Swedish comprehensive schools, and hopes they could be in Britain. Unfortunately, the American experience is more relevant for Britain than the Swedish. Sweden is a small country with a total population about equal to that of greater London, and with no very large industrial cities. But the educational problems of cities like Leeds, Birmingham, Liverpool, and Manchester seem to me similar to those in American cities. There is a strong chance that similar difficulties about academic standards would develop.

Mr. Crosland suggests that the British public schools before the war were in fact "comprehensive": they offered grammar, modern, and technical courses to children of all intellectual levels. "No doubt the average level of intelligence was higher, owing to the more favourable parental background; but the dispersion was probably not significantly less." I think he makes two errors. First, the dispersal of intelligence was probably *very significantly less* than would be found in a random group of comprehensive school children in any of Britain's large cities. Secondly, what can be done for children from good homes, getting a good deal of individual attention in the controlled atmosphere of boarding schools, is different from what can be done for children in large classes, many of whom come from, and return within six hours to, underprivileged or unhelpful homes.

Mr. Crosland concludes that, if Britain makes the educational reforms he suggests, all schools will be more and more socially mixed, and employers will cease asking applicants what schools they have been to.* "Then, very slowly, Britain may cease to be the most class-ridden country in the world."

This seems questionable. A review of the new book by Margaret Mead, *New Lives for Old*, remarked, ". . . Dr. Mead . . . draws many lessons—among them that it is easier for a group to change its whole way of life than a part of it, and that you cannot change a culture by educating the children. . . ." If this is true of the relatively simple society she studied, Mr. Crosland should at least be cautious in ignoring its possible application to Britain—which has probably the most complex society in the world.

I believe Britain's educational system would benefit from many changes, some of them fundamental. My quarrel with Mr. Crosland is that he is too optimistic about what can be accomplished and how it should be done. I think he has "tried hard" in a field in which he appears to have had little experience, and it makes many of his observations seem superficial. I have no short-term solution for Britain's educational problems; and it would be presumptuous to add remarks which purport to offer one. But as fundamental changes in Britain's educational system will be slow in coming, I would suggest some helpful changes that could be made fairly easily within existing arrangements.

It is too often forgotten that the basis of a good education is a good teacher and a high quality of teaching. It seems to me therefore that at present, the easiest and most efficient way to increase equality of educational opportunity, and to improve its quality, is to concentrate on cutting the size of classes drastically. A teacher with twenty students does not accomplish merely twice as much for them as one with forty, but much more. And "more" does not mean merely more information, but social training in ways of speaking and self-expression, *plus* the inculcation of more subtle things like curiosity and self-confidence. I have taught classes of forty and classes of ten, and both in State and private schools. It is not remotely comparable.

It will be said that this is an economic problem, as if that made it insoluble. I believe it would be worth diverting some of the money now being spent on buildings and equipment to paying more money to teachers—and recruiting more. Buildings and equipment are important. Some of those in use today are a disgrace. But between having forty children in a class in a new building and two classes of twenty each in an old one, I know few real teachers who would not vote for the second every time.

Secondly, I think school buildings should be used to provide out-of-class activities, to enrich the background of children from poorer homes (though this brings other problems with it). They can also be used to provide study facilities for children who need them. Mr. Crosland points out the difficulties of studying in crowded,

* Perhaps! But in America, with *millions* of University graduates, Harvard, Yale, and Princeton still carry more weight with many employers than the State Universities. So do the private schools in America.

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noisy homes. More teachers might mean a few on duty to help with prep—a useful service for children who cannot get such help, when needed, at home.

These may appear minor reforms. They are. But small classes and individual attention are the basis of good education. Almost everything else is secondary. If—while the debate on comprehensive schools, the eleven-plus examination, transfer at fifteen to centralised sixth forms, etc., goes on—children are being taught in small groups to work, interested, to the limit of their ability, we shall have started towards equal educational opportunity.

MARJORIE BREMNER

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"The Indian Alternative"

THOUGH I share Mr. Strachey's optimism (October 1956) about the eventual outcome in India, my reasons are almost the opposite of his. I am optimistic despite the Second Five Year Plan; he, because of it.

What most impressed me during a brief stay in India a year ago was the feeling and atmosphere of excitement and enterprise. India is clearly on the move and it is not merely the government that is moving. The breakdown of traditional attitudes and social arrangements that is so clearly in process promises to release great reserves of private energy and initiative. This seems to me the basic fact about Indian economic development and the basic reason for optimism about the future. The underlying forces for change are so powerful that they can ride roughshod over many obstacles, including unwise governmental policy on economic matters. The basic requisite for progress is the wise facilitation of this breakdown of traditional attitudes, the establishment of an environment within which the enormous pent-up energies of millions of intelligent and vigorous people can be expressed productively and effectively.

Much governmental activity in the First Five Year Plan contributed to this requisite—in particular, the extension and improvement of roads and other means of transportation, the widening and strengthening of educational opportunities, including the agricultural extension service which impressed me, as it did Mr. Strachey, most favourably, and much of the community development programme with its reliance on local initiative and co-operation and its contribution to the weakening of caste barriers. The activities along this line contemplated in the Second Five Year Plan are all to the good and will help to promote an environment favourable to both economic growth and political freedom and democracy.

On the other hand, the Plan attempts much more than this. It attempts also to control in considerable detail the direction of economic activity in both the nationalised and the private sectors. The investment programme for the nationalised sector is exceedingly large. In addition, the Plan calls for control over investment in the private sector, foreign exchange control and direct controls over imports and exports, special taxes on activities to be discouraged and subsidies to those to be encouraged, the reservation of market shares to particular industries or segments of industries, and so on. All these seem to me to be deterrents to growth and threats to freedom. It is noteworthy that the striking improvement during the First Five Year Plan in agricultural output, rightly emphasised by Mr. Strachey, is attributable hardly at all to the major public projects of the valley improvement variety; it is attributable rather to a host of small projects of irrigation, fertilisation, improvement of techniques, and the like, spread over the face of India and carried out primarily by individuals or small groups in fairly direct pursuit of their own immediate interests. Government was here a supporting factor, a catalyst, not the prime mover.

The economic control aspects of the Plan seem to me adverse to Indian economic development and a threat to political and civil freedom for a number of reasons. The broadest and most general is in no way specific to India. It is the belief that widespread central planning of economic activity is not likely to raise the standard of life of the ordinary man and that it is inevitably a "road to serfdom." The theoretical considerations that underlie this belief have been dramatically confirmed by the experience of recent decades both in Russia and more recently and even more strikingly in the rest of Eastern Europe: to the best of my knowledge, no country that has embarked on the widespread central planning of economic activity has yet succeeded in raising the standard of life of the ordinary man, and most have produced a sharp decline. The economic gains some of them boast about are to be found in other directions, in indices of "investment output" or "industrial production" or "national income." It remains to be seen whether these will remain, as they have so far been, impressive monuments, like the Pyramids of Egypt, or can in fact be translated into higher living standards for the masses, a translation that I conjecture will prove far harder in practice than on paper. And it is certainly clear that these countries have not provided freedom for the individual. There seems no exception to the generalisation that a strong private economic

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sector is a necessary condition for preserving freedom of the individual.

This reason, basic though it is for the long view, is not at the moment decisive for India. Agriculture, small-scale trade and manufactures, domestic handicrafts, and the like are so important in India that, for a long time to come, the bulk of economic activity will remain private whatever happens to large-scale manufacturing, transportation, and the extractive industries. I turn therefore to three more prosaic and immediately practical reasons.

In the first place, the general structure of the plan seems to me ill-adapted to India's basic needs. The emphasis on heavy industry at one extreme and on handicrafts at the other is presented as a way of simultaneously making the best of India's scarce supply of capital and its plentiful manpower. It seems to me rather to make the worst of both worlds. The heavy industries seem likely to waste India's scarce capital by combining it with too little labour; the handicrafts, to waste India's plentiful manpower by giving it too little capital to work with. The optimum utilisation of India's resources seems to me to be somewhere in between. India's great problem is to improve the efficiency of her productive techniques, to raise her output per head. It surely is a strange route to this objective to begin by discouraging efficient techniques and subsidising inefficient ones.

In the second place, and perhaps more important, judgments such as the one just made are extremely hazardous, even when stated in very general terms let alone when stated in terms of specific activities and industries. India is entering on a poorly charted course. It is hard to predict just what will turn out to be the most fruitful use of Indian resources, just what direction her economic development should take. I happen to think that, at least for the short-term future, the most productive use of capital in India is likely to be in relatively light industries using fairly simple though modern techniques; both because these have a relatively high ratio of manpower to capital and because they will lead to a more rapid spread of technical literacy among the population at large. Professor Mahalanobis thinks the most productive use of capital to be in heavy industry, to lay what he regards as the essential foundation for an industrial society. Neither of us can be certain that he is right. Under the circumstances, the urgent need is for flexibility; for a set of arrangements that will permit experimentation and trial and error, the abandonment of the unsuccessful experiment and the exploitation of the successful. But it is just this that the Indian planning arrangements —if the paper plans were in fact put into effect— would not permit.

Under Indian conditions, it is by no means certain that particular plants will be run more efficiently on the average under private than under governmental auspices, though I am inclined to believe it likely. But it is certainly clear that if any particular plant turns out to have been a mistake, there is some chance that a private firm will be allowed to fail and the experiment to be abandoned; there is a far smaller chance that a government plant will be; it will simply be subsidised or sheltered in some less obvious way. Even if the Plan were in all details the best that could be devised on the basis of present knowledge, even if every detail were administered efficiently, the very execution of the Plan would impose a degree of rigidity on economic development that would interfere seriously with taking full advantage of experience as it develops. Flexibility and adaptability are not the least of the virtues of a private market system.

In the third place, as Mr. Strachey points out, one of the scarcest resources in the Indian economy is the administrative training and skill required to run an elaborate, highly centralised plan. I share his admiration for the higher ranks of civil servants. I have never come into contact with a body of civil servants in any Western country, including your country let alone my own, who seemed to me so uniformly able and competent. But they are few in number and cannot possibly handle the task involved in the expanded rôle of the public sector planned on paper—which is one reason I am sceptical that the plan will be realised. Furthermore, it is not generally realised how much the success of any large-scale organisation depends on the competence and integrity of the many at the lower levels and not merely the quality of the few at the top. The problems of quality that Mr. Strachey mentions with respect to the clerical grades of the Civil Service are for this reason likely to prove a major obstacle to the successful expansion of the public sector.

I find much, too, to agree with in Mr. Strachey's strictures on the capitalist sector; "big" business in India is not like American or English big business. But I believe that Mr. Strachey has not cast his net wide enough or adjusted his sights to the altered circumstances. The great reservoir of entrepreneurial talent is in the millions of small traders, merchants, and fabricators. This is where rapid development can, and I believe will, come. Such development may be less dramatic than the construction of large public plants, and will certainly give every external appearance of being less orderly and tidy, but it will be surer and much more important. True, most of these men, too, are hidebound by custom and unenterprising by Western

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standards. But one must keep in mind that a growth in aggregate output of some five per cent a year would be a most satisfactory performance, so what is required is only that there be some among them who are not.

Looking back over the First Five Year Plan, I believe that the most important obstacle to rapid growth was not the much-publicised failure to reach certain specified targets for public investment—for reasons just noted I regard this as a favourable development—but erratic and unwise monetary policy. The initial inflationary monetary policy of 1950 to 1951 and the subsequent rather severe deflationary policy from 1951 to 1954 may between them have reduced the annual rate of growth from a potential five or six per cent a year to the three or four per cent actually realised. Similarly, looking forward, the ambitious plans for government investment will, to the extent that they are realised, involve much waste of capital resources—the government steel plants may well prove to be a sort of 20th century Taj Mahal. But India can stand this waste provided it does not lead either to a severe open inflation or to an extensive and deadening network of direct controls designed to suppress inflation. Either of these would cripple the spread of a money economy and so block the major channel to progress. If neither occurs, the major effect of government activity will be to divert private ingenuity to a successful attempt to devise ways to get around the regulations and controls. The actual effect of either the restrictive or protective actions of government will thereby be much reduced and the main forces dominating Indian economic activity will be found elsewhere.

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BOOKS

ST. GUY AND MERRY RUSSIA

IT WOULD be interesting to calculate the number of words written about the Burgess–Maclean affair. They must run into several millions, with doubtless many more to come. It will, presumably, go down to history as one of those cases, like the Dreyfus and Hiss ones, which symbolise the conflicts of an age.

My own view has always been that the departure of Burgess and Maclean to Russia was a piece of great good fortune. Their manner of life, as recounted by their friends and acquaintances, would surely have ensured their dazzling promotion in a society where those in authority are passionately concerned to demonstrate that they are free from conventional and class prejudices. The respectable who blush for their respectability are, of all people, the most dazzled by drunkenness, perversion, and irresponsibility. But for their untimely, but fortunate, disappearance behind the Iron Curtain, I see Maclean as permanent under-secretary at the Foreign Office and Burgess as the head of M.I.5.

Of course they may still return and resume their careers, fortified by a thorough grounding in Soviet affairs. To judge by Mr. Tom Driberg's account of his conversations with Burgess in Moscow* there would seem to be no particular reason why they should not. According to this account, Burgess was an exemplary and brilliant student, first at Eton, and then at Trinity College, Cambridge, where his social conscience was aroused and he joined the Communist Party. He also, while at Cambridge, had his first experience of "militant industrial action." The college waiters were, it appears, employed on a "more or less casual basis," and Burgess "was among those who actively organised them to protest against this system." A strike was threatened, and "the college, fearing the publicity, gave way."

Maclean was a contemporary of Burgess at Cambridge, and also joined the Communist Party, but, Mr. Driberg considers, they were not alike, or even particularly sympathetic. Whereas Maclean is "of the Scottish governing type, as rigid, austere, and uncompromising as John Knox," Burgess may be likened to "an old-fashioned anarchist or to Dzerzhinsky, the Polish squire and humanist who supported the Bolshevik Revolution." Dzerzhinsky founded the Cheka, and was the predecessor of those other humanists, Jagoda and Beria. If (which is by no means impossible) Burgess should at some point find himself in uncomfortably close contact with the present incumbent, General Serov, it is unlikely that humanism will characterise their relations.

In 1934, at the end of his fourth year at Cambridge, Burgess paid his first visit to Russia, and reached the conclusion that "a country engaged on such vast domestic undertakings . . . would never engage in aggressive war." It was the period of the forced collectivisation of agriculture, when I happened to be in Russia myself as a journalist, and was able to visit the Ukraine and Caucasus. Mr. Driberg quotes a remark attributed by Sir Winston Churchill to Stalin that this grisly episode was "all very bad and difficult—but necessary." Mr. Khruschev, as we now know, takes a different view. In fact, there is a certain danger, I should have thought, of Burgess falling into disrepute as a Stalinist as a result of Mr. Driberg's account of him.

The Times, the BBC, the Secret Service, the Foreign Office—these are among the chambers of horror through which the disconsolate bourgeois intellectual must wander. Burgess was no exception (his very name, Mr. Driberg tells us, "is an English adaptation of de Bourgeois"), though for some extraordinary reason he skipped the *Manchester Guardian.* According to Mr. Driberg, however, his pilgrimage included the bizarre experience of advising Mrs. Charles Rothschild on how to invest her money. For this useful service he received the somewhat modest remuneration of £100 a month.

For Intelligence activities he appears to have had a natural aptitude and taste. While the

* *Guy Burgess. A Portrait with Background.* By TOM DRIBERG. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. 12s. 6d.

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Czechoslovak quisling, Henlein, was in London, Mr. Driberg recounts, "through a friend who was working as a telephone operator at the Goring Hotel, he (Burgess) obtained a list of all the telephone calls that Henlein made while in London," and, presumably, passed them on to another friend in the Secret Service. Without overrating the efficiency of the security authorities, one may, I think, assume that this enterprise seemed to them neither novel nor necessary. Again, he had a mysterious acquaintance in Paris with the unattractive name of Pfeiffer, who was able to provide him with an account of the proceedings of French Cabinet meetings. Here, too, his efforts may well have been superfluous. Such information is readily available to journalists, let alone intelligence agents.

THE most curious part of Mr. Driberg's narrative is that relating to Burgess's reasons for leaving clandestinely for Russia with Maclean. Burgess had just returned from America. He sought out Maclean "because I had perfectly innocent personal messages for him from people in America, and I also wanted very much to discuss with him a rather serious memorandum I'd done on the Far Eastern situation." They sat talking "on a sofa outside his room at the Foreign Office. Looking back, I suppose his room was 'miked.'" On the way from the Reform Club to the RAC, Maclean said, "I'm in frightful trouble. I'm being followed by the dicks." And there, sure enough, they were—two stage policemen "jingling their coins in a policeman-like manner and looking embarrassed at having to follow a member of the upper classes." (I like that last touch.)

The explanation Maclean gave for being subjected to police surveillance was that "he'd been making indiscreet remarks around the office—saying that Soviet policy was correct and that Western policy was leading to war." Burgess felt comforted to find that someone else thought as he did—"It was almost—well, almost uncanny: I mean, we had both been Communists at Cambridge, but we'd hardly seen each other since. Yet our differing knowledge and experiences had kept us both Marxists and we had simultaneously, though separately, reached precisely the same conclusions." So, as a matter of fact, had a great many other people—a militant section of the Labour Party, the *New Statesman and Nation*, the Communist Party, as well as numerous clergymen, peers, dons, economists, and other vocal persons. Burgess, however, had somehow overlooked all of these. He had thought he was alone, and now had found a comrade. What more natural, then, than that they should go together to the U.S.S.R.? The only snag was that on the Queen Mary coming from America Burgess had "made friends with an American, an intelligent progressive sort of chap," with whom he had planned "a jolly jaunt" in France. Which was it to be—a jolly jaunt in Paris or a jolly jaunt in Moscow? He chose Moscow, whence he set off armed with an omnibus volume of Jane Austen's novels. The bag he left on the boat to St. Malo, which so mystified investigators of his and Maclean's disappearance, was, he explained to Mr. Driberg, "the stuff for the jolly jaunt" with the progressive, intelligent American—"a dinner-jacket, etc. —one needs a dinner-jacket in Paris."

There is no difficulty in understanding why Burgess, situated as he is, should thus account for his clandestine departure with Maclean. What is more difficult to understand is how Mr. Driberg can possibly (as he appears to do) believe him. For Mr. Driberg must know that, if there were nothing more against Maclean than "making indiscreet remarks around the office," no charge could possibly have been made against him, and that if he had wanted to go to Moscow he could have resigned from the Foreign Office and gone quite openly. After all, plenty of British nationals have lived and worked in the U.S.S.R., in the employ of the Soviet Government, without losing their British nationality or suffering any sort of opprobrium. Up to a short while before Burgess and Maclean appeared at a press conference in Moscow last February, official denials were being issued by the Soviet authorities that they had ever come to the U.S.S.R. Burgess told Mr. Driberg that he was against this secrecy, and that he wanted to write "a short letter to *The Times* saying that, as a Socialist, I had come to a Socialist country to help the cause of peace." But, he added, "people here were against it. Actually, I believe it was Beria's fault." If so, Beria's influence must have extended long after his execution. The fact is that the story just does not stand up at any point, and I am astonished that someone as shrewd and competent as Mr. Driberg should be prepared to sponsor it.

MR. DRIBERG'S narrative is supported by the standard Communist mythology—as that the Soviet Government was eager to provide military help to the Czechs at the time of Munich, and that Stalin only agreed to the Nazi–Soviet Pact because we were dilatory and obstructionist and sent an official to negotiate instead of a Minister, and that Molotov wanted to participate in the Marshall Plan, but was frozen out by us, etc., etc. It is no good producing evidence against this mythology. Where true believers are concerned, Messrs. Khruschev and Bulganin alone can provide an effective demolition squad. And, it must be admitted, they go

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to it with a will. They are believed even when they say what Western journalists, exiles, official documents, and other such sources of information have been saying for years past.

All this does not mean that Mr. Driberg's book is valueless. On the contrary, it manages to convey, by implication, a vivid, and even at times moving, impression of Burgess and his present circumstances. One sees exactly the kind of person he is—the vanity, snobbishness, romanticism, weakness masquerading as defiance, retreat from reality somehow made to seem an advance upon it, which constitute him. One senses the influences which played upon him, the perky, half-baked longing somehow to be someone which so impressed a Hector McNeil. It all makes a comprehensible pattern—that old Etonian Tie, that Everyman Library most of which he has read since he went to Moscow, that Dacha he tries to get to every evening (but in a "restricted area" which is why he could not entertain Mr. Driberg there), that "sharp note" he wrote to Beria "telling him he was wrong, and telling him why I knew he was wrong"; that piously preserved letter from Sir Anthony Eden—"Truly I enjoyed every moment of my stay in Washington, and you will know how much you helped to make this possible."

Mr. Driberg writes of Burgess's "proud knowledge that his Huguenot forbears had come for conscience's sake to the land which, in the seventeenth century, had seemed to them as strong a citadel of freedom as, later in the twentieth century, another land was to seem to him to be." Burgess gets the English newspapers, and so will know, even in his citadel of freedom, what has been going on in Hungary. Among the many ironies of an ironical time must be counted this one—that Burgess's apologia, presented affectionately and respectably by Mr. Driberg, should have been appearing in the *Daily Mail*, of all newspapers, just when the whole Hungarian population were fighting with inconceivable heroism, first against the Communist régime which had been imposed on them, and then against the Red Army itself.

Malcolm Muggeridge

MR. KENNAN AS HISTORIAN

IN RECENT years the name of George Kennan has become a familiar one amongst those people in Great Britain who are interested in the development of the United States. Though it is only rarely that we see Mr. Kennan move to the front of the stage, all his appearances seem to hold some excitement for us, and his person has come to be associated with a great expectancy. As chief of the policy-planning section of the State Department, and then as United States ambassador to Moscow, he has been the experienced practitioner in the world of diplomacy, concerned most of all with the problem of Russo-American relations, and associated with all that Englishmen find sympathetic and understanding in the foreign policy of the Democratic Party. But while many students of the present-day have been willing to write generally on current affairs, and diplomatic historians have been prepared to engage in precise and concrete pieces of research, he has been one of the few who have attempted also to examine the nature of diplomacy itself, to ask why it is that countries have a foreign policy, and to reconsider the whole problem of international ethics—analysing the righteousness of the self-righteous, attacking the agreed lie, and taking the mask away from political falsities. Since he has adventured into a field in which there is pioneering to be done, he may have slipped into some of those errors of statement or expression to which the pioneer is particularly liable. Because he exposes the *Realpolitik* that shelters behind an arrogant Pharisaism, he is even accused of an affection for *Realpolitik*, and his opponents — particularly those who want to stop a departure from conventional thinking at any price—have hoped to be able to wipe him off the map by focussing attention on a few doubtful points and ambiguities. They have not succeeded in disguising the fact that Kennan is not only a pioneer but also a man of high and austere ideals.

In the years since he left the State Department, and again since he was withdrawn from the Moscow embassy, it has been known that he has been engaged in study amid the charming scenes and in the attractive intellectual atmosphere of Princeton. It is to be hoped that he will not find the academic retreat too entrancing, since the world may be badly in need of him in other ways; but his career does suggest a policy which might be worthy of consideration. Those who are in the foreign service of their country are having their minds clogged with the masses of typescript which they continuously have to pore over. They tend to be constricted within that agreed framework of thinking in which it is apparent that people become locked when they

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work together in a closed circle. They are kept with their nose to the ground by the multiplicity and pressure of their immediate problems, by the unremitting demands of each successive day. We cannot tell our Foreign Offices to open their windows and let in the air or take in the light; but it would be a happy thing if, amongst those who have served for a long time, there could be hope of a sabbatical period, spent (perhaps without too definite a programme) in a university—a year or so during which a man could see problems in perspective, reflect on the fundamentals of diplomacy, consider the trends of the time on a long-term basis, and marry his practical knowledge to the results of an historical enquiry more profound than anything to which he has been accustomed in his official life. Mr. Kennan is all the more interesting to us in that he combines study and experience—close enquiry and long reflection.

He had already written in a general way on fairly recent American diplomatic history. There has now appeared the first volume of his long-awaited work on Soviet-American Relations, 1917–1920.* It is a volume of well over 500 pages, and it is concerned with a period of only five months, November 1917 to March 1918. In a sense it is a *tour de force*, for it is packed with matter, and yet, in the period which it covers, the ordinary diplomatic historian might wonder whether there were any Russo-American relations to make a song about at all. An enemy might say that this book is padded out with the trivialities of diplomatic life and intercourse; yet apart from one or two chapters in the early part of the book, which run a little lame, this is a better story than most of the diplomatic narratives that one meets; it carries the reader along; and precisely because it is so detailed—almost as close to life day-by-day as a novel can be—it throws great light on the whole body of events with which it deals.

THE period is one concerning which the world can bear to listen to everything that there is to tell; and down to a remote future, historians will be continuing to examine it with ever more powerful microscopes. The year 1917 is the tragic year of 20th century Europe, for it decided that the First World War should be fought to the bitter end, that the ensuing peace should be one of "total surrender" rather than of negotiation, and that the subsequent course of the world should be deflected cataclysmically. The result was that Germany was more thoroughly despoiled, and (partly out of a feeling of injustice) there ensued the rise of Hitler.

* *Russia leaves the War*. By GEORGE KENNAN. Faber and Faber. 50s.

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The Austro-Hungarian Empire was dismantled; and Hungary, Bohemia, and Poland have moved into a servitude surely more strong and deep than anything they suffered before. Above all, the insistence of both sides on continued war, and the callousness of the Allies in the face of the sufferings of Russia, meant that Revolution was to be the real victor of the First World War —Revolution which one must dread and dislike, but which at least works not blindly (not with purposeless infatuation) and which produced such a landslide in world history that one must wonder whether it is at all paralleled even by the fall of the Roman Empire.

The background of Mr. Kennan's story is the Russian Revolution in its extremely interesting early stages; and it is good to be taken through this epic once again, and to see the events in detail from the point of view of the Americans who were on the spot at the time. We are given a picture of the United States embassy in Russia, the personalities in and around it, the curious relations with the home government in Washington, and the play of hope and fear amongst foreigners marooned in a revolutionary capital. The main themes that are caught into the narrative are: the effect of the Russian Revolution on Allied peace aims and on the production of Wilson's Fourteen Points; the question of the recognition of the Soviet government and the establishment of relations with anti-Bolshevik centres in Russia; the negotiations between Russia and Germany at Brest-Litovsk for the establishment of peace; the meeting of the Constituent Assembly; and the problem of Siberia in the early months of the Revolution, the predicament of Vladivostok, and the question of allied intervention, or of Japanese intervention alone, in the Far East. The enquiry has not been confined to the events in Russia itself. The author, using official documents, private papers, and the press, carefully examines the attitude of the United States government, the information in its possession at a given moment, and the source of the decisions that were taken.

An important feature of the book, however, is the history of the sub-official activities of Americans in Russia; also the account of the interplay of personalities within the embassy itself and, still more, in the circles that were more or less in contact with it. The American Military Mission to Russia, the Committee on Public Information, the American Red Cross Commission, and the Stevens Railway Mission, play a significant part in the narrative; and their leaders are often more important than the ambassador himself, who appears as a dim and ineffective figure. Much of the book possesses a texture which differs greatly from that of conventional diplomatic history; and at times in some of the early chapters the concentration on the details of personal story and private relationships make one wonder for a moment whether there is not some lack of selectivity—some sign that here is an amateur in the work of diplomatic history research. The impression is liable to be intensified by the fact that there was so little for American diplomacy to do in the early months of the Russian Revolution. Certainly, at this period, and in respect of Russia, there is not much American foreign policy to discuss.

The course of the book seems to me to justify the author. He has added to diplomatic history exactly the kind of thing that we always need. The formal relations between governments—the things that emerge from the official correspondence—are only part of the story. Once the official archives have been opened to the free play of scholarship—the minimum requirement and the real test of a government's readiness to see the truth revealed—we still need all the private correspondence, all the informal data, that we can gather, and this is no mere addition or ornament but an essential ingredient in historical reconstruction. It is particularly important in respect of the American side of this story—that is to say when we are concerned with actual policy-making, so that it is important to track down a decision to its various sources. And here Mr. Kennan has pursued his researches unremittingly, assembling a wide range of material around a given decision. In respect of the Russian side of the story the method was inescapable because formal relations were non-existent and it was very largely through informal channels that problems were raised and policies discussed or put into execution. In any case, during the first five months of the Revolution, the informal contacts between Americans and the representatives of the Soviet—Robins' interviews with Trotsky and Lenin, for example —have an interest of their own. If the diplomatic history is submerged in general history on the one hand and in ordinary human history—in a straight narrative about people—on the other hand, this is one of the ways by which we escape the dangers of the kind of history that is mere abstraction. It gives us a more vivid apprehension of the past in its concreteness; and it supplies some of the things that we need for the explanation of foreign policy itself.

It is not because Mr. Kennan is unsympathetic, or uncomprehending, that his book seems to show up the littleness of men, the mediocrity of many of those people who have in their hands the destinies of the human race. It is difficult not to feel that America herself was woefully unfitted for the part that she had to play in the world; and Mr. Kennan makes no attempt to

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disguise the fact. Some of his concentrated judgments are excellent, as in the case of his remarks (pp. 433–4) on

> *the somewhat unorthodox concept of diplomatic representation that animated both the United States government and its Ambassador in Petrograd: the idea, namely, that the Ambassador was accredited to the Russian people rather than to the Russian government, and that his function in Russia was not so much to provide a channel of inter-governmental communication as to express America's enduring interest in the Russian people and her moral support in their struggle for freedom.*

The pictures of the other Allies—to a certain degree of England, and very definitely of France—show how painfully inadequate men and nations can appear when the events against which they are measured turn out to have a pivotal place in the diagram of world history. Both in their newspapers and in their history the Americans are more frank than we are, less skilled in soft-pedalling (or less anxious to suppress) the more sordid and undesirable features of a story. Here, too, much of our history is tolerant of quiet imposture, and we must not always take the claims of historians too literally. Even a Ranke was willing to suppress evidence for the benefit of the Prussian government; even an Acton was ready to write under the limitations of an official historian for the sake of Gladstone; even men not in the pay of the government may behave as official historians, or may imprison themselves in the "official" framework; and there must exist in all countries many historians who are really pledged not to tell the world all that they know—pledged not to reveal some of the things we most wish to hear about. It is difficult to see anything of the official historian in the writer of the present work.

Mr. Kennan's story is bound to be a little unfair to every personality in it, however, because the Russian episode is treated in isolation, and the reader cannot be aware—nor can the author very well continually remind him—of the mountainous pressures that existed throughout the continent, a continent then at a frighteningly critical stage in an unprecedented war. Granted the isolation of the theme, this is a disadvantage that could hardly have been avoided; but perhaps it might be argued that the book could have been strengthened in a different way, one which would have enabled the author to give greater exercise to an art which he assuredly possesses. Even though the situation was such that the principal policy was bound to be a waiting one, and Soviet-American relations have in a sense to be characterised as non-existent, one could wish that Mr. Kennan had taken more

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opportunities for the discussion and exposition of high policy, and for considering the Russian events in relation to the things that were going on in a wider world. Also, though he deliberately sets out to describe a scene and clearly draws on first-hand experience in some of his descriptions of Petrograd or Moscow, and though there is a sense in which his characters do indeed live, a book of this form (and this degree of detail) would gain much from more explicit portraiture —portraiture even where it is irrelevant to the diplomatic narrative, and where it is interesting only as adding to the concreteness of the historical reconstruction.

IT MUST be confessed that Mr. Kennan has chosen to live dangerously, and perhaps it would not be out of place to give him a warning, especially as warnings come most kindly when they are given by an admirer. It sometimes happens that those who have not from the first been trained in the procedures and the profession of research fall into some fault of disproportion, through an exaggeration of the technique and a lack of sense for the dangers that lie in the technique. A momentous example of this was given in the last generation by Amy Lowell in her massive biography of Keats. Those who are on the one hand interested in the technique of historical research, and on the other hand are delighted to read about what goes on below the surface of diplomacy—those, in fact, who are fascinated by the underside of the piece of embroidery—may find enjoyment in a work that is written on the method and scale of *Russia leaves the War*. It is possible that the magnitude of the events of 1917–18, the pictures of a sort of *demi-monde* of diplomacy, the comments and judgments of Mr. Kennan himself (which would be valuable to some of us if only because we want to know what his judgments are), and, finally, the dramatic spectacle of the confrontation between such colossal issues and such little minds, will carry the general reader through the lengthy narrative. The risk is great, however, especially as Mr. Kennan not only shows the face of the clock, so to speak, but insists on displaying so much of the "works." It is as though he were trying to out-do the historical technician at his own game, besides out-doing him in wisdom, experience, and wealth of insights. A prolonged series of volumes on the present scale would achieve their high objective only if a firm and continuous course of high policy were at the basis of the structure, giving the work a strong backbone. And even in the field of technical history it is true that the greatest artistry is sometimes that which conceals the art.

Herbert Butterfield

A BAD HEAD FOR TIME

I AM afraid I have a bad head for time. I do not mean by this that I am unpunctual, for I am not, any more than to say of a man that he had a bad head for heights would imply him ignorant of the respective footages of Everest, Aconcagua, Kilimanjaro, Primrose Hill: but that, asked to cling to an instant and from it look down into the tremendous prehistory-deep Gulph (if I may so spell it) of the past, or up into the unutterable empyrean of what is presumably yet to come, I am afflicted with the same sort of *vertige* as similar situations in space inflict on certain others. If I take my eye off the present, a nausea and shaking ensues. Or, to shift the image slightly, I tumble as a man does who, crossing a stream by a plank, removes his gaze from his immediate footing, or the opposite shore, to the headlong waters beneath. That I am not in the least alone in this, emerges with sufficient clarity from the first book* that I have under review.

M. Georges Poulet, to be sure, has a time-head of granite, and in his *Studies in Human Time* he employs the time-sense as a virtually new tool of literary analysis. This book consists of an immensely tough "Introduction," in which the author attempts to establish an ideal schema of altering time-conceptions through the last five or six centuries: and a series of only a little less gristly summations of individual (French) authors—Montaigne, Descartes, Pascal, Molière, and so on by way of Rousseau, Constant, Vigny, Baudelaire, to that Pope of Time Marcel Proust —considered here purely from the standpoint of their views upon the nature of "human" time, that irresolvable paradox of discontinuous dying-as-they-are-born moments of present consciousness (M. Poulet quotes Boileau: "The moment in which I speak is already far from me"), which are nevertheless felt to resolve themselves into at any rate some kind of a continuum; and this fundamental paradox set against such other conflicting conceptions as that of the extra-temporal Divine which nevertheless by a process of continuous creation or re-creation "keeps time

* *Studies in Human Time*. By GEORGES POULET. John Hopkins Press (Geoffrey Cumberlege). 40s.

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going"; the curious and partly illusory freedom of the human mind to range in time whether in memory or foreboding; the problems of free will and causality which are in effect only extensions of this fundamental problem of time; the difficulties of postulating such a thing as any real continuity of human personality—the child being possibly father to the man, but not in any verifiable sense one with him.

Only a trained philosophical mind (I think) could hope to read these studies with any ease or more than partial comprehension. I at any rate found myself brought short time and again by sentences in which, while all the words and phrases appeared reasonably clear, the total meaning was evasive:

> *In this duration which is compelled into being by the mind, and which the mind adorns by its operations, there is discovered a temporal frame of a nature precisely contrary to that of the duration flux upon which the person leaving the state of sleep emerged in order to surrender himself to it.*

Difficulty is of course inherent in the nature of this subject, and these not infrequent rigours of communication do not seem to be the fault of M. Poulet nor often, I fancy, of his careful translator, Mr. Elliott Coleman: they are clearly a comment on the reader rather than the read. What *is* sufficiently evident, however, is that M. Poulet has invented one of those instruments so dearly sought by the addict of "comparative" criticism: his classification by "theory of time" provides something like a universal by which to assess the achievements and outlooks of writers otherwise not easy to juxtapose. A powerful weapon, if a potentially dangerous one.

ABOUT the systematising "Introduction" I have greater reservations. Mr. Sean O'Faolain, in a second new critical work,* remarks:

> *I did not attempt to systematise the conclusions that presented themselves to me as I re-read these novelists. I feared to be tempted by the appeal of a schematical argument into forcing a theory instead of accumulating what I hoped would end up as an informative review of a literary period. . . . As so often happens the end of the journey now finds itself in the prospectus, these prefatory pages.*

It is not a temptation feared by M. Poulet. Not believing in Mr. Amis's "two-minute flip-through" I was forced to devote a five-day plough-through to the forty pages of this "prospectus" (which explains why the good editors of ENCOUNTER will receive this copy rather later than they had hoped for), at the conclusion of which I emerged with an impression still opaque indeed, but in what clarity it had, not altogether favourable. M. Poulet has all the professional's expertise and mastery of technica which enable him to toss off sentences like "The *ex nihilo* is no less necessary a condition of Condillacian creation than of Augustinian or Cartesian creation." But he has also the professional's narrowness which blinds him to all existence outside that professionalism. Thus he erects a scheme in which each century possesses an identifiable watertight conception of time of its own; and expounds it in phrases such as:

> *On the contrary, it is the greatness of the 18th century to have conceived the prime moment of consciousness as a generating moment and generative not only of other moments but also of a self which takes shape by and through the means of these very moments.*

or:

> *The essence of pre-romanticism consists perhaps in this: in the discovery, within the breadth of the instantaneous, of a self and of a reality which are not instantaneous and which consequently must always be*

* *The Vanishing Hero.* By SEAN O'FAOLAIN. Eyre and Spottiswoode. 21s.

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experienced in the instant as if they were something never realised by the instant.

Is that *really* the "greatness" of the 18th century? Does it *wholly* account for, say, *The Rape of the Lock*, *The Magic Flute*, Robert Adam, and the Declaration of Independence? In what sense does that "essence of pre-romanticism" illumine Thomson's *Seasons* and the *Elegy written in a Country Churchyard*? Only too soon it becomes evident that by "the 18th century" M. Poulet means no more than "a few seminal philosophers of the 18th century," and that the speed and degree of their effect, or lack of it, on the writers, still more on the readers, who make up the only real entity that we can term "the century" is something beyond the author's interest and so beyond his consideration.

Similarly, M. Poulet seems to suffer from an undisclosed fallacy about the "fundamental" being therefore the "primarily important." Certainly houses would fall down without them, nevertheless the science of architecture is *not* the science of foundations. Philosophical problems of such things as the continuity of time, or the reality of the external, are obviously in a *professional's* sense fundamental; but they are precisely the problems that must necessarily be ignored if life is to be lived, and infinitely less important in any *human* sense than such questions as "What is the interaction between mind and body?" or "Is sexual love a madness or a revelation?" or "Should I have given that old man a penny?" And it is to this latter type of question that writers, being above all human, have principally devoted their attentions.

There is in France, it seems to me (perhaps wrongly), an ideal that Mr. O'Faolain might categorise as "the Critic as Hero." The French appear to admire their critics as the Germans do their generals—for power, ruthlessness, inventiveness, mastery of the *Kriegspiel*. M. Poulet does not so much explore as conquer. As one sees all the untidy minorities, the sprawling resistance-pockets, succumb to his armoured divisions, the Gaul in one is inclined to also stand and cheer, together with *La Croix* ("A master-work") and *Le Monde* ("A great book"). The Saxon in one, on the other hand, is up and asking iconoclastic questions about "sense of humour," "common sense," and "sense of proportion." In the end, I came to the conclusion that the difficulties of the theoretical portions of *Studies in Human Time* principally arose from the near-impossibility of keying them to whatever I knew of the practical facts of the matter.

WHAT then of *The Vanishing Hero*? I must not say of so good an Irishman that Mr. O'Faolain's work seems to me to show all the English critical virtues. Yet it does so, and some special Irish ones for good measure. Apart from those derived from negativing the French vices just suggested, I mean such things as reverence for the text; an open mind; enlightened empiricism—a sort of receptive teasing-out of the elusive essence rather than the bull-dozing formula; irony; the sense of the *pas trop sérieux* (if it must be one or the other, literature is another game, not another religion); above all, in the sore-headed context, urbane readability. Mr. O'Faolain considers Huxley, Waugh, Greene, Faulkner, Hemingway, Elizabeth Bowen, Virginia Woolf, Joyce—the representative novelists of the twenties. The tentative theme adumbrated in the title is more or less self-explanatory. The author regards the novelistic Hero as essentially a social conformer:

> *That was in those good old days when novelists were prepared, with whatever mental reservations, to accept the fact that certain current ideas expressed firmly and clearly what the majority of people meant by a good or wholesome life . . . and that anybody who rebelled against them, whether in real life or in fiction, must find himself not only in conflict with his community but in conflict with his origins and probably with his own nature. In admitting so much* [they] *admitted the concept of Heroism.*

Since the middle of the 19th century, however, the anti-Hero has been usurping the Hero's place:

> *This personage is not a social creation. He is his own creation, that is, the author's personal creation. He is a much less neat and tidy concept, since he is always presented as groping, puzzled, cross, mocking, frustrated, and isolated, manfully or blunderingly trying to establish his own personal, supra-social codes. . . . Whatever he is, weak or brave, brainy or bewildered, his one abiding characteristic is that, like his author-creator, he is never able to see any Pattern in life and rarely its Destination.*

Mr. O'Faolain (who is incidentally one of the most sensible and reliable of contemporary novel-reviewers) develops this theme with liveliness and precision, seasoned with a welcome dash of Erse devilry whenever the laughing mood is on him. Which is usually.

MR. Robert Gittings' *The Mask of Keats** is not another of those "Mask" books but a collection of extremely ingenious pieces of pure Keats' scholarship. The subjects range from such

* *The Mask of Keats*. By ROBERT GITTINGS. Heinemann. 16s.

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whodunit matters as the dating of the "Bright star" sonnet (does it really matter whether it was actually Fanny Brawne's or Isabella Jones' *ripening breast*, particularly since in the event the unlucky poet was never "cheek-pillow'd" on either?); to important and hitherto unsuspected discoveries about the extent of Keats' indebtedness to the *Inferno* and *Vathek*.

Mr. Gittings' extreme ingenuity is occasionally his own enemy. A case for "influence" of *Troilus and Cressida* on the "Bright star" sonnet based on nothing firmer than a fancied resemblance between:

The moving waters at their priest-like task
Of pure ablution round earth's human shores

and:

The bounded waters
Should lift their bosoms higher than the shores
And make a soppe of all this solid Globe

is going to convince no one, and it is no good Mr. Gittings trying to browbeat us with asides about "cadences and turns, hardly definable but nevertheless real, which the sensitive listener can hear, but which argument is often hard put to it to demonstrate." Thank you, Mr. G., we are sensitive too: to hearing the inaudible, however, we would apply another word.

But this over-reaching is, I must make it clear, exceptional. The explication of *The Cap and Bells*, for instance, is a marvel of ingenuity, quite new (I believe) and entirely convincing. The satire is shown to be literary not political. As a parting gift to Mr. Gittings' *worser* self, incidentally, I recommend to him a closer study of his quoted lines from Hunt's *Rimini*:

Space after space,—and yet the attendants come,—
And deeper goes about the impatient hum—
Ah—yes—no—'tis not he—but 'tis the squires
Who go before him when his pomp requires;
And now his huntsman shows. . . .

Stop! That's it. *Hunt's the man.* The impatient *hum*! Mr. Gittings has already satisfactorily identified Shelley's comic character, Hum, with Hunt. Is not this the clincher?

Hilary Corke

ONLY YESTERDAY

HISTORIANS are fond of warning one another, and their students, of the perils latent in the analysis of recent events. We must (they say) wait for the ashes to settle, the lava to cool. We must see things in a distant perspective that only time can furnish. On the one hand, we suffer from insufficient evidence: the important papers are still locked away (and even if this were not so, the law of libel might deter us). On the other hand, we suffer from too much evidence—trivia by the ton. Again, only time will enable us to determine what among all the detritus is of lasting significance.

These warnings and warnings-off are, of course, sincere; and are useful up to a point. Historians as a group are not fools. But they are sometimes dullards. Each occupation has its *déformation professionnelle*. That of historians is a snobbish and squeamish timidity—a sort of caste-system based on comparative chronology. Recent history is not untouchable, yet it is not quite respectable: to venture into it is to risk being described as a "journalist," which in academic circles is a term of abuse. I am sorry that this is the case—at any rate in Britain—and glad that a few of our best historians have, nevertheless, brought their gifts and learning to bear on the contemporary scene. For the task of the historian is to make sense of the thoughts and motives of the tribe—to clarify, if not to purify; and where is this more necessary, though more difficult, than among the clutter and bedlam of the immediate past?

In America the situation is different. There are fewer official inhibitions; indeed, Mr. Robert J. Donovan, a Washington correspondent of the New York *Herald Tribune*, was (somewhat to the annoyance of less fortunate colleagues) not merely permitted but actively encouraged to prepare "a durable history" of the first three years of President Eisenhower's administration.* Perhaps Americans are more aware than we of national problems, more anxious to define them, and hence more ready to co-operate in discussing them. Thus, Mr. Eric Goldman, in preparing his book on the Truman and Eisenhower years,† wrote to, or sought interviews with, scores of prominent Americans. He tells us that nine out of ten responded to his appeal. Mr. Gunther and Mr. Quint, by their own account, took less pains over their picture-book.‡ Still, they had the

* *Eisenhower: the Inside Story*. By ROBERT J. DONOVAN. Hamish Hamilton. 30s.

† *The Crucial Decade: America, 1945–1955*. By ERIC F. GOLDMAN. Knopf. $4.00.

‡ *Days to Remember: America, 1945–1955*. By JOHN GUNTHER and BERNARD QUINT. Hamish Hamilton. 35s.

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archives of *Life* magazine at their disposal; and Mr. Gunther has had plenty of experience in surveying the landscape of modern times.

THE results of their various investigations are interesting and entertaining. Mr. Goldman, who is a professor of history at Princeton, rivals F. L. Allen's famous old work, *Only Yesterday*, in charm and fluency. His book is mainly a narrative that rattles along through the early gaffes of Harry Truman, the Marshall Plan and Point Four, the astonishing election of 1948, the Hiss–Chambers case, Korea, the dismissal of General MacArthur, the victory of his former subordinate—General Eisenhower—in 1952, the McCarthy uproar, to the "Eisenhower equilibrium" of 1955. By way of interpretation, he suggests that America "believed in its heart of hearts that somewhere, somehow there must be a foreign policy which had the supreme virtue of making foreign policy unnecessary"; that, failing to discover such a solution, some Americans were quick to conclude that their country was the victim of an internal conspiracy; that McCarthy functioned as their witch-doctor; that the equilibrium restored by Mr. Eisenhower, while rather fortuitous, was more wholesome than the "normalcy" invoked by Warren G. Harding a generation ago. Though there is nothing strikingly novel in his thesis, Mr. Goldman has done a humane and intelligent job in summing up *The Crucial Decade*. I hope his book will be published in Britain.

The Gunther–Quint compendium could serve, so to speak, as the film of the book, where Mr. Goldman's work is concerned. While it has a clear and reasonably informative text, the photographs—some 400 of them—domineer over the printed paragraphs. They show everything from basketball to brain-surgery, and everybody from Albert Einstein to Richard Nixon or Grandma Moses. Mr. Donovan's study has its fascination, too, of another sort. We read it to discover the real lineaments of the Delphic figure known as Dwight D. Eisenhower. We do in fact learn something fresh, if not sensationally so, about the procedure at cabinet meetings, the President's methods of delegating (or, some would say, avoiding) his duties, his irritation with old-guard Republicans, and so on. Mr. Donovan is a competent reporter, and no one has challenged his version.

Even so, it must be said that none of these books entirely justifies the case for recent history. Mr. Goldman's comes nearest. One unconscious temptation with such material is, I suppose, to strive for the wrong sort of popularity. Here is stuff the general public knows about: dramatise and simplify, stir the bubbles up with a swizzle-stick, and you may be in the money, on the best-seller list along with such perennials as Norman Vincent Peale. I do not maintain, or believe, that such a consideration weighed with Mr. Goldman—though certainly there is nothing criminal in wishing to turn an honest penny. But at times he is too sprightly; the local colour looks like Technicolor; the aphorism sounds too much like a wisecrack, the homeliness too artificial, as if Princeton had Will Rogers on its campus.

The deficiency is much more discernible in Gunther–Quint. It would be unfair to reproach either gentlemen for not doing what he never set out to do. Yet *Days to Remember* is an unmemorable book. The illustrations are technically admirable; some are brilliant and even moving. But to look through them once is to satisfy one's curiosity too easily. They have the scrapbook interest of the ephemeral, the monotony of vividness. Perhaps the trouble is that they too often, in the guise of social history, record merely the passing fad: bingo, bubble-gum, flying saucers: things that are true but not the truth about an era, *Life* but not life. How much more impressive, by contrast, is Mr. Robert Penn Warren's modest, almost sketchy little notebook on the mood of the South.* How much better for taking thought, for being able to say something in language that goes beyond peppiness, for probing a little deeper:

> *Out of Memphis, I lean back in my seat on the plane, and watch the darkness slide by. I know what the Southerner feels going out of the South, the relief, the expanding vistas. Now, to the sound of the powerful, magnanimous engines bearing me through the night, I think of that, thinking of the new libel laws in Mississippi, of the academic pressures, of academic resignations, of the Negro facing the shotgun blast. . . . I feel the surge of relief. But I know what the relief really is. It is the relief from responsibility.*

Indeed, in one sentence he manages to sum up what these other books are talking about. It is "the national rhythm, the rhythm between complacency and panic."

THE shortcomings of Mr. Donovan's treatise are of another order. He claims that it is not an "official" history, but it has a kind of official solemnity—and was it not surely bound to have, since it was written more or less by invitation? As an honourable man, what could Mr. Donovan do except repay courtesy with courtesy? "It is," he says, "to the best of my ability a reporter's book, straightforward and objective. . . . My purpose has not been to praise

* *Segregation*. By ROBERT PENN WARREN. Eyre and Spottiswoode. 9s. 6d.

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or blame or make a critical appraisal, but to tell a story." In other words, a series of newspaper items strung industriously together. He has been handicapped in a way by his subject, for worthiness and decency—both attributes of President Eisenhower—are not qualities that it is easy to convey with any degree of sharpness. But in struggling to be just, Mr. Donovan is frequently tedious, because he is so unselective. We learn that the code-name for the President's plan to offer fissionable material to the United Nations was changed from "Operation Candor" to "Operation Wheaties" (the name of a breakfast food). Why mention that at all, unless with an ironical intent? Mr. Donovan keeps his face so straight that we must presume he meant no harm in writing of Mr. Eisenhower: "His head was bowed slightly as if in thought." And there are far too many passages of this type, in Dragnet prose:

> *Early in the morning, reporters had begun lining up for the press conference outside the Indian Treaty Room on the fourth floor of the Executive Offices Building, across the street from the west wing of the White House. Three hundred and eleven of them had jammed into the ornate room when at 10.31 the President walked in, dressed in a tan suit and vest, white shirt and brown tie.*

This is the kind of tell-all technique that tells nothing. The detail is superficial; the reporter has become a recording machine, or like the three brass monkeys on the mantelshelf. Such a tendency is all too common, as a method of dealing with current events. As with the photographs in *Life*, it seems candid, intimate, a "disclosure," an inside story; but it is actually evasive, shallow, and mechanical. I do not mean that Mr. Donovan's book is worthless, but that portions of it unwittingly support the argument that recent history is much too serious an affair to be left entirely to newspapermen and politicians. The historian should join them, for his own good as well as theirs.

Marcus Cunliffe

A CHARM AGAINST IDOLATRY

SIMONE WEIL, a Jewess of the French professional class, was born in 1909. She taught philosophy, worked in a Renault factory, cooked for the International Brigade in Spain (where she scalded her feet), barely escaped a Catholic conversion in Marseilles, sailed with her parents to New York, came to London, and died in a Kentish hospital rather more than halfway through the war. In her lifetime she published almost nothing, and, certainly, never properly finished a book, though *L'Enracinement*, a memorandum composed for the London Gaullistes, is consecutively written. The present work* apart, nine further volumes have been compiled from her fragmentary writings, three of which have already appeared in English with the same publisher. Some five years ago, in a *New Statesman and Nation* review of her *Waiting for God*, no less a person than Graham Greene dismissed Simone Weil as a muddle-headed prig. Less emphatic and perhaps no less clear-headed people, including a good many Catholics, have seen in her the most effective religious writer of the century, so that in some circles she has taken the place of, or been accommodated side by side with, Kierkegaard and/or Léon Bloy.

At the time of her departure for New York, in the spring of 1942, Simone Weil confided to M. Gustave Thibon, a Catholic philosopher with whom she had stayed the previous year, eleven exercise-books of philosophical fragments and notes on her reading. From these, shortly after the war, he compiled the volume *La Pesanteur et la Grâce*, translated in this country, with an awkward and slightly misleading near-literalness, as *Gravity and Grace*. It must immediately strike anybody who compares that volume with the two now under consideration what a clever and at the same time what an honourable job of work M. Thibon did. The general reader will still do best with *Gravity and Grace*. The *Notebooks* in full are only for those who have already decided that there is a great deal for themselves in Simone Weil.

These excruciating volumes afford no relief. If they had been divided by date or into eleven parts corresponding to the exercise-books from which they were drawn, the reader would at least have had some fixed point to read up to before tucking in his slip of paper and going out for a walk. As things are, he must simply go on reading until he can bear it no longer. For a page or two at a time, his attention is firmly held, and then for pages and pages he must stumble among Upanishads, algebra, Plato,

* *The Notebooks of Simone Weil*. Translated by ARTHUR WILLS. Routledge. 2 vols. 56s.

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scientific formulæ, folklore, a sentence perhaps about each in turn, together with incomprehensible diagrams and unintelligible sequences like:

[*Death?*]
Conversely . . .
(*Mechanism of ice-boxes to be investigated.*)

And, really, one wishes that Graham Greene had been right and that one were not a book-reviewer (or, as we like to say, "critic"), or, at any rate, not a very conscientious one.

The translation is not unmitigatedly good. One likes to think of poor Mr. Wills now recuperating in some really attractive spot on the proceeds, but, of course, there was no stylistic flow to consider, only a dogged, consistent accuracy. In notes made during a first, rather tentative reading, I find I have faulted him more than twenty times, sometimes for his English ("like Christ did . . ."), sometimes his French (really, there must be an English metal-worker's name for the kind of mill or shaping-tool known as a "*fraise*," and has Mr. Wills never heard love-at-first-sight described as "*le coup de foudre*"?), several times for being mildly unscrupulous (a Bible Concordance would have helped), and once for dropping a pair of square brackets and the implied question mark and thus firmly installing a blunder on the French editor's part. Simone Weil had written:

Quand on a des maux de tête au point que tout son est douleur. . . .

This evidently made no sense to the French editor, who no doubt lived in a quiet neighbourhood and had never been troubled by traffic or neighbours' wirelesses, let alone by the kind of headaches Simone Weil used to get, for he took "*son*" as a pronoun and tried:

. . . au point que tout son [*être*] *est douleur. . . .*

Mr. Wills now confidently translates:

When one is suffering from headache to the extent that one's entire being throbs with pain. . . .

However, let it be said that, in first getting through two volumes like these, one is grateful even for the incidental pleasures of mistranslation. (One thing Simone Weil says here is that all writing is translation and can never be anything more. But let it be perfect.)

Are these two handsomely produced volumes, therefore, a dead loss? I suspect that they are (in English). Since reading them is going to be a sweat anyway, it seems to me that even the reader equipped only with school-French might just as well sweat through them in the original. What there might well be some point in is a greatly enlarged *Gravity and Grace*, a higher proportion of the notes regrouped and annotated perhaps from the first in English.

For there can, I think, be no doubt that Simone Weil is, in some way, important. In her manner of writing, there is no salesmanship or flourish whatever. All is direct, unaffected, passionate. This seems little to claim, but the fact is that, reading Simone Weil, one begins to see how much flourish, salesmanship, etc., there is in almost all the other writings one had previously considered free of these vices.

I suppose that Simone Weil's central preoccupation could be said to be man's situation, his place in a world as bleak as Sartre's and more painful, yet relieved by valid poetic intuitions and containing a God, himself not much given to providing consolations other than those invented for themselves by men and institutions endlessly self-deceiving and destructive. The world of Simone Weil is a world so dreadful that it needs God, and yet she convinces us that she has neither exaggerated its dreadfulness nor cheated about the possible compensation. One of her leading ideas is that of stop-gap imagination, *l'imagination combleuse de vides*, which she finds in almost every literary structure, social

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form, ideology, religion. Even the Catholic church, which she greatly valued as a repository of genuinely communicated truths, she sees as a form of Plato's Great Beast, liable to provoke idolatry of itself as an institution.

The publication of her work has proceeded largely under Catholic auspices. Mr. Greene was jumping the gun of a wholly imaginary party line. Yet the question is there. Simone Weil must be making converts. She must also be turning people away. One could equally imagine the Church beatifying this non-Catholic or putting her books on the Index (possibly both). In *La Pesanteur et la Grâce*, M. Thibon did not in the least attempt to conceal Simone Weil's view of the Church. The *Notebooks* do, however, contain further charges of totalitarian narrowness and stupidity, further underminings of central doctrines.

Two things to which the *Notebooks* give more prominence than one might have guessed at from the other writings are the mythologising, almost Jungian preoccupation, shown previously in *Intuitions Pré-Chrétiennes* and *Connaissance Surnaturelle*, and a preoccupation with physical science and more especially with the laws of thermodynamics as a source of legitimate representations of the nature and behaviour of spiritual energies. There is a distinct materialistic and mechanistic strain in what has been all-too-readily described as the mysticism of Simone Weil. On myth and folklore, she would, in the end, have written a sizeable book. A sizeable book could even now be put together from her various jottings and more sustained pieces on the subject. Her trend is to show that in Plato, in Indian epic, in Anglo-Scottish ballads and fairy-tale, no less than in the *Queste del Saint Graal*, there are religious intuitions of great depth and that this is the main point about all these works.

For my own part, I will go on record as being of the opinion that Simone Weil's greatest importance is that of a critic of society. I do not at all wish to be thought inclined to the view that political and economic problems can best be examined in a religious light. Nor, so far as I can see, was that how Simone Weil looked at them. She had immersed herself at least as deeply as George Orwell in the circumstances of the underdog, and, as she was both more intelligent and more humanly responsive, nothing concrete in the nature of his (the underdog's) affliction and nothing inward in the animal mechanisms by which he adjusted himself to it escaped her. She did not think that society could be spiritualised. She considered only that there were minimum spiritual requirements, that a society which did not meet them or permit them to be met was unspeakably horrible and that, fifteen years ago, we already had such a society. It was a question not even of mercy, but only of justice. She argued convincingly on behalf of tradition. Her unfinished play, about the same conspiracy as Otway's *Venice Preserved*, makes it quite clear how fully aware she was of the poetry of settled forms. One would have liked to read her on the new, idolatrous traditionalism, which appears to desire injustice on the ground that it is traditional.

Rayner Heppenstall

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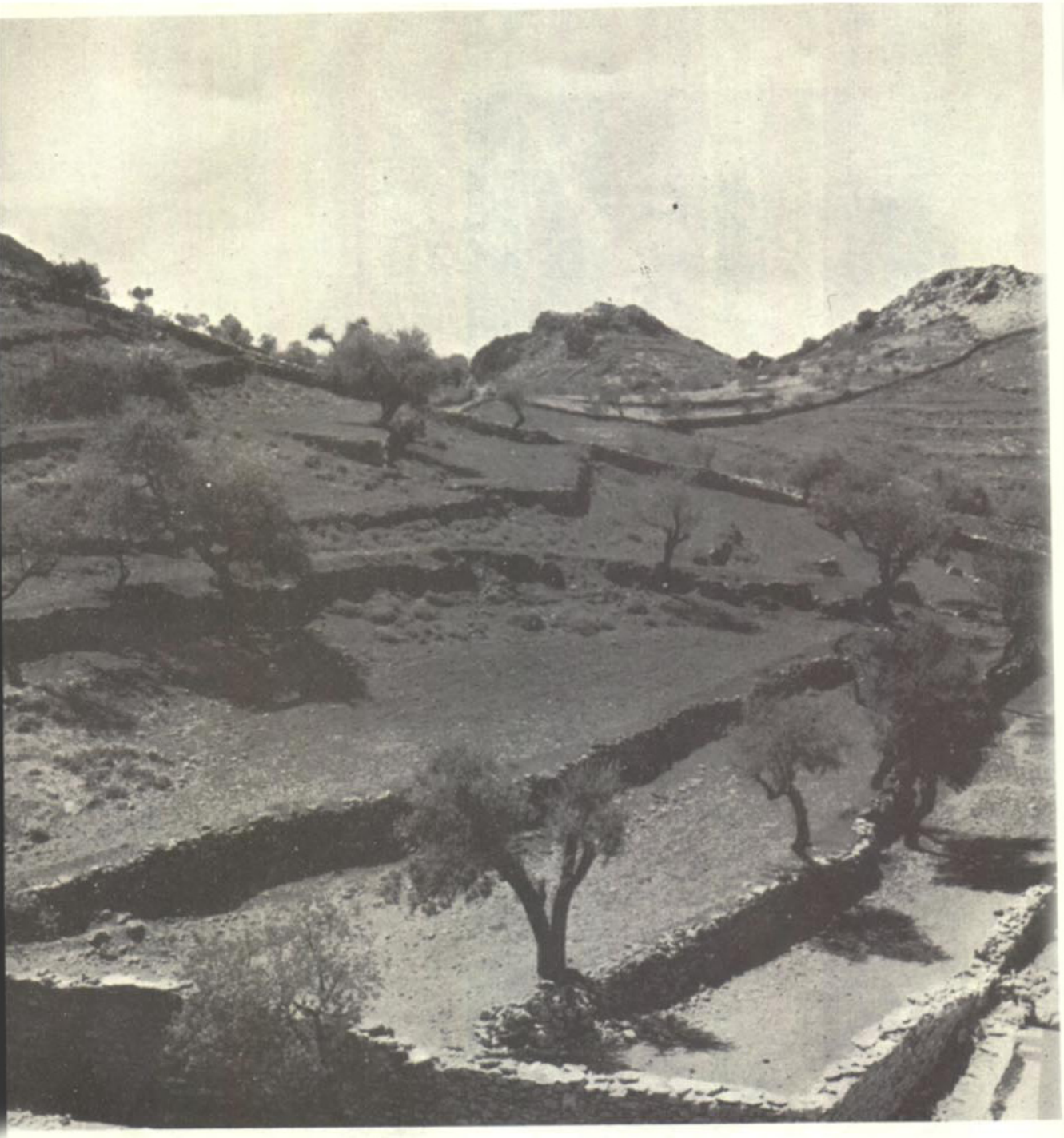

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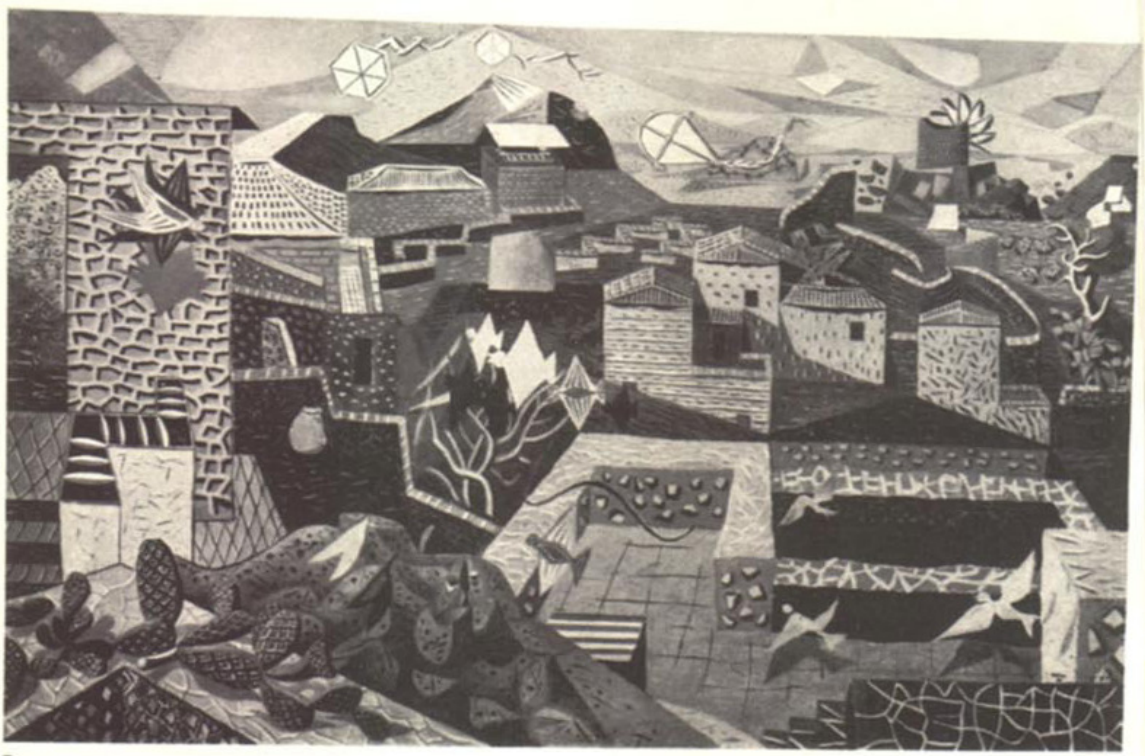

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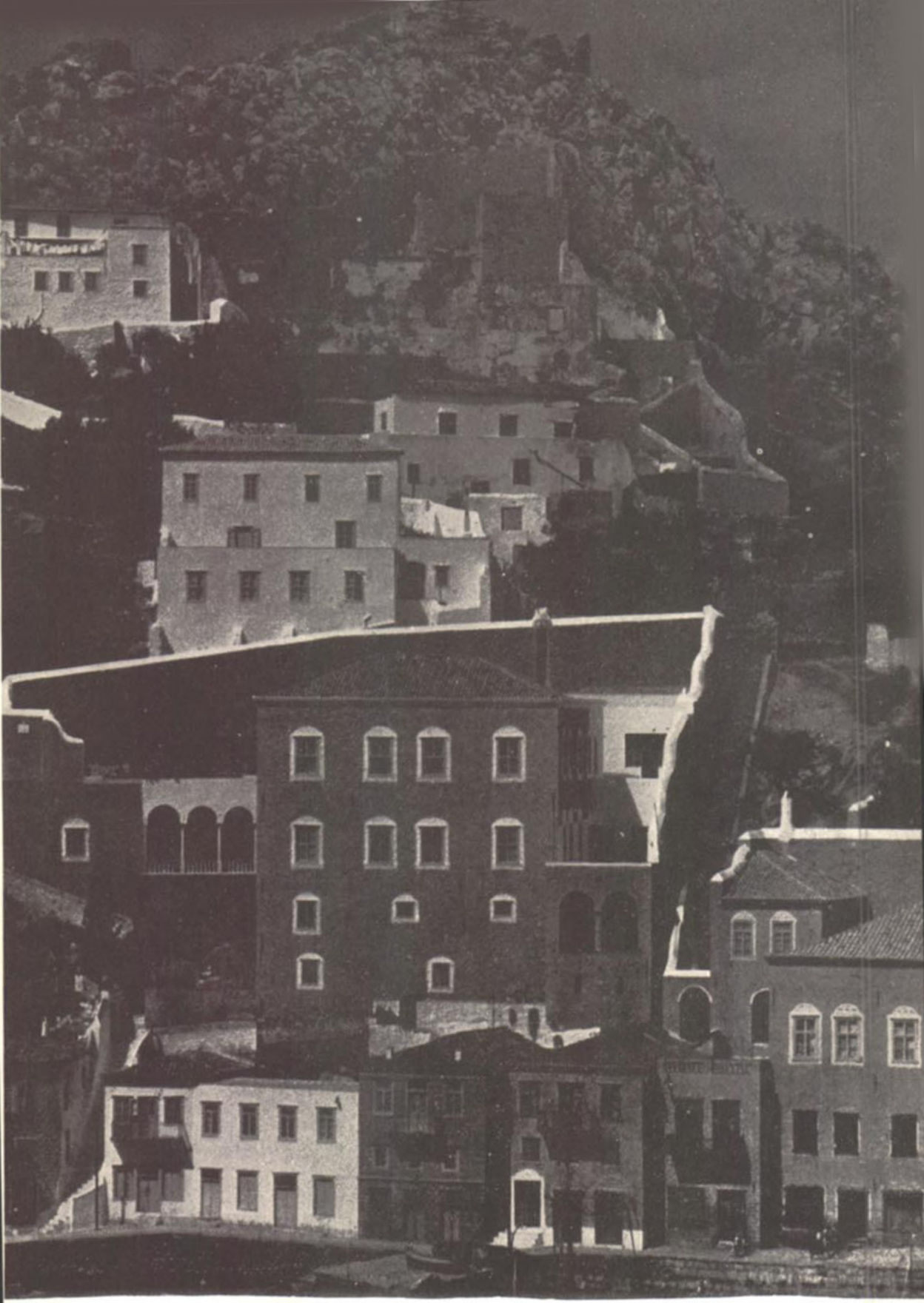

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ABOUT OUR AUTHORS

Colin Wilson has the following to say in connection with the article we publish in this issue:

"This autobiographical fragment is condensed from the Introduction to the second part of *The Outsider*, which I have been working on. The aim in this 'sequel' will be to attempt to diagnose the condition of our civilisation today, and the Outsider's part in it. Its main contention is that our civilisation can only be saved by a new religious age. I feel that undue emphasis has been placed on the 'gimmicky' element in *The Outsider*—an immense mail from correspondents who claim to be Outsiders testifies to this; and its central contention—that a religious position can be rigorously deduced from purely philosophical premises—has hardly been clearly recognised. The question to be examined in this second part is whether civilisation can follow the same road as the Outsider to a new religious attitude. It consists mainly of studies of various religious 'outsider' thinkers — Boehme, Law, Swedenborg, Pascal, and Newman among them —and of the historical logic of Spengler and Toynbee.

"At the moment, I am also preparing to undertake major revisions of the novel on which I have been engaged for the past five years—a parallel study of a Nietzsche-type Outsider and a sadistic killer (based on Kurten, the Düsseldorf murderer). This I regard as my major work to date. I have also begun a play for the Royal Court Theatre, and (in fact) intend to do a series of them as soon as I have finished work in progress.

"The second part of *The Outsider* will be my last critical book."

STUART HAMPSHIRE, who is 42, was educated at Balliol College and elected a Fellow of All Souls in 1936. He was a lecturer in philosophy at Oxford before the war, when he served in the Army. After the war he was in the Foreign Office, but then turned to teaching and writing philosophy, first at University College, London, and then at New College. In 1955 he returned to All Souls as a research fellow. He has published a book on Spinoza (Penguin 1951; Faber 1956), and since 1939 he has published a number of articles both in philosophical journals and elsewhere. He is a frequent contributor to our pages.

ANDREW SHONFIELD was born in Tadworth, Surrey, in 1917, and was educated at St. Paul's School, London, and Magdalen College, Oxford. He did economic research for a time for the Royal Institute of International Affairs; then joined the British Army as a gunner in the Royal Artillery. During the later stages of the war he served as a staff officer at Allied Forces H.Q. in Caserta, Italy, in charge of one of the integrated Anglo-American departments. He joined the *Financial Times* in 1946 and since 1949 has been Foreign Editor of the paper.

PETER WILES, economist and Fellow of New College, Oxford, seems to be on his way toward becoming an involuntary expert on East European revolutions. He arrived in Poznan the day rioting broke out; and popped over to Hungary just in time to be caught up in the revolution there. . . . JAMES BALDWIN, the young American Negro novelist, who now lives in Paris, is the author of *Go Tell It On the Mountain* (Michael Joseph), a first novel which received high praise in both the U.S. and England. His second, *Giovanni's Room*, has just been published in New York. . . . HERBERT BUTTERFIELD, Master of Peterhouse, Cambridge, is at present engaged in writing a one-volume "Shorter Cambridge Modern History," and also two works on George III's reign and Charles James Fox. . . . MISHIMA YUKIO is a brilliant young Japanese writer of 31 years, and one of the most productive in Japan. In addition to publishing several novels, he has written short stories, ballet, opera, films, and plays. He also sometimes acts in his own plays. He is a pioneer in the writing of *noh* plays—classical plays—in modern form. A novel of his, *Sound of Waves*, has just been published in the U.S. by Knopf.

Erratum: In Michael Polanyi's article, "The Magic of Marxism," in last month's issue, the last sentence on page 5 should read: "We have lost confidence in the classic [not '*class*'] formulations of liberalism."

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